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POET LORE

WORLD LITERATURE AND THE DRAMA

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AUTUMN 1940

POET LORE

A QUARTERLY OF WORLD LITERATURE

Founded in 1889 by

CHARLOTTE PORTER *and* HELEN A. CLARKE

JOHN HEARD, *Editor*

EDMUND R. BROWN, *Managing Editor*

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EARTH LOVER

By Edith Lombard Squires

Down under deep grass,
Out of sight and sound,
Is a length of brown earth
Waiting underground.

It will hold my still hands
And my quiet feet —
I shall rest there gladly
And the grass will meet,

Grow and wave above me
All the live-long day —
I shall lie there dreaming —
None to say me nay.

I shall hear the brown thrush
Singing to the sky,
In the hush of winter
None so still as I.

I shall learn earth's secrets
Soon to meet the sun,
I shall know the wonder
Of new life begun.

Down under deep grass
Sod and sky above,
I shall lie at rest there
With earth for my love.

THE FAITHFUL DOG

A FARCE BY CERVANTES

Translated by ANGEL FLORES AND JOSEPH LISS*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

A SOLDIER — *the faithful dog*
A WICKED SACRISTAN — *named Lorenzo Pasillas*
A YOUNG MAN — *named Andres and beggar of alms for Santa Lucia*
ANOTHER YOUNG MAN — *named Manuel and peddler of lady's notions*
A SHOEMAKER — *named Juan Juncas*
CRISTINA DE PARRAZES — *kitchen maid*
THE MASTER — *of the house where Cristina works*
THE MISTRESS — *of the house where Cristina works*
ANOTHER SACRISTAN — *Grayales*
MUSICIANS

SCENE: *A Street in Madrid.*
TIME: *May,* 1611

SCENE: *In front of a house in Madrid.*

(*Enter a soldier, dressed in tatters, a wretched sash, and a pair of spectacles, brandishing a sword and chasing a Sacristan.*)

SOLDIER. Empty shadow ! Why do you trail me ?

SACRISTAN. I'm no empty shadow but a massive body — flesh and blood !

SOLDIER. Even so — who are you and what are you looking for in this street ?

SACRISTAN. I ? — I am Lorenzo, sub-sacristan of this parish. I am looking for that which you can't find, although you too are seeking it.

SOLDIER. Are you then — er — perchance looking for Cristina — the kitchen maid — the one from across the street ?

SACRISTAN. Right you are !

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SOLDIER. So ! Come here, you Satan's own sub-sacristan.

SACRISTAN. Why should I, you old war horse?

SOLDIER. Listen here, jackass, do you realize that Cristina is my treasure ? *Mine* — you understand !

SACRISTINA. (*coming back at him.*) And do you realize, you octopus in men's clothes, that that bit of treasure is *my* very own — mine — that she belongs to me ?

SOLDIER. In God's name, don't lie or I'll split you in two, (*He brandishes his knife.*) and smash your head into a thousand pieces. Tell me — dog — do you ever speak to Cristina ?

SACRISTAN. Sure ! — Quite often.

SOLDIER. What presents have you given her ?

SACRISTAN. Many.

SOLDIER. How many and what, may I ask ?

SACRISTAN. Well, I gave her a big box — one of those which come full of quince marmalade — filled with wafer clippings, white as snow. Also four wax candle ends, as white as ermine.

SOLDIER. (*Furious.*) Yes — and what else ?

SACRISTAN. A love letter, containing one hundred wishes to serve her.

SOLDIER. And she, how did she return these favors ?

SACRISTAN. She assured me that she will presently be my wife.

SOLDIER. But aren't you of the subdeaconry ? Aren't you forbidden to marry !

SACRISTAN. It's true that my hair has been clipped as closely as a lay-brother's, but still I haven't a tonsure. I can marry whenever and as often as I damn please — you'll soon see for yourself ! (*He is about to go.*)

SOLDIER. (*Grabbing him.*) Come here, you lay-brother of a devil, answer my questions. If this girl has returned so generously — and I don't believe it — your paltry favors, how will she return my splendid ones ? Only the other day I sent her a love letter, written on the back-side of a petition intended for His Majesty, in which I pointed out to him the extent and magnitude of my services and my present needs, for a soldier can always say he's poor without falling into disgrace for it. This petition was duly decreed and was

doubtless worth four or six reales. Then with incredible liberality and notable ease, I wrote my love letter on the back of it. See !

SACRISTAN. Have you given her anything else ?

SOLDIER. Why, certainly ! — I gave her sighs, tears, sobs, paroxysms, swoons, with the entire throng of protestations used, at the ripe time, by experienced lovers in order to disclose their passion.

SACRISTAN (*sarcastically.*) Have you serenaded her ?

SOLDIER. Why, yes — my lamentations, my anguish, my anxiety and grief, are all serenades.

SACRISTAN. And how has Cristina repaid you for the countless services which you have done her ?

SOLDIER. Alas, she does not even wish to talk to me — even see me — she curses me whenever she meets me. She soaks me daily with scullery water from her dirty dishes while I stand under her door. I am, as you can see for yourself, a faithful dog, in brief, the farmer's dog, or the dog in the manger, which whether starved or glutted never stops barking — who neither eats the cabbage nor lets others eat it. I may not be able to possess or enjoy her myself, but no one shall as long as I live. (*Menacingly*) So! — Señor sub-sacristan, you better go before I break your head.

SACRISTAN. You say this because I am unknown. There, I'll show you !

SOLDIER. Ha ! Ha ! What can one expect from a *sub* - sacristan.

SACRISTAN. Wait and see.

(*The sacristan dodges and escapes a blow from the soldier and runs into Cristina's house.*)

SOLDIER. O women, women, how fickle and whimsical you are ! Cristina, my dove, are you going to leave this budding flower of soldiery out in the cold while you take in that dung - heap of a sub - sacristan ? Only a sub - sacristan, mind you — you, who are capable of winning a full - fledged sacristan — aye, even a canon ? I am determined to drive away from your door whomever I suspect of being your lover or suitor. I'll win the title of the faithful watch dog. I'll stand firm ! — by God —

(*Enter a young man with a box with which to beg alms for some saint.*)

YOUNG MAN. (*shouting.*) In the name of the Lord, give me alms for oil for the lamp of the señora Santa Lucia that she may protect your eyes. (*Yelling up to the floor above.*) Hey, there ? Any alms today ?

SOLDIER. Hallo, friend Santa Lucia, come here, what do you want in this house ?

YOUNG MAN. Can Your Grace guess? Alms for the oil for the lamp of the Señora Santa Lucia.

SOLDIER. Are you begging alms for the lamp, or for the oil in the lamp?

YOUNG MAN. Every one knows that I ask for the oil of the lamp and not for the lamp of the oil.

SOLDIER. And do they usually give you alms in this house ?

YOUNG MAN. Yes, indeed, two maravedies each day.

SOLDIER (*suspicious.*) And who comes out to give you the alms, may I ask ?

YOUNG MAN. Whoever is nearest the window — usually a young kitchen maid named Cristina — as pretty as glittering gold.

SOLDIER (*tapping his foot knowingly.*) So! — the young kitchen maid as pretty as glittering gold, eh ?

YOUNG MAN. As pretty as a shining jewel.

SOLDIER. So you think the girl is not bad ?

YOUNG MAN. (*Matter of factly.*) Not bad, not bad at all.

SOLDIER. Not bad at all, eh ? — You numbskull, idiot, — oh, whatever is your real name ? I don't care to call you Santa Lucia again.

YOUNG MAN. All right, call me Andres.

SOLDIER (*threatening*). All right then, señor Andres, follow my advice; take these eight reales, and consider yourself paid for four days. Then go away, with God's blessings, and don't dare hang around here for the next four days, even if you need oil for your lamp. Otherwise — I'll separate your body from your soul! Understand!

YOUNG MAN (*retreating.*) I'll remember that, Your Honor, and I'll not return for a whole month — but, please, take it easy, your excellency. I'm leaving right now.

(*Exit on the run.*)

SOLDIER (*patting himself on the back.*) That's the way — keep up your good work, you faithful watch dog.

(*Enter* ANOTHER YOUNG MAN, *peddling curling irons, Dutch linen, cambric line, Flemish laces, and Portuguese thread. He yells out, quite vociferously, his wares.*)

SECOND YOUNG MAN. Who buys curling irons, Flemish laces, Dutch linen, cambric linen, Portuguese thread — ?

CRISTINA (*from the window.*) Hey, there, Manuel, have you any trimming for a pretty chemise ?

SECOND YOUNG MAN. Yes, I have, and very good, too.

CRISTINA. Well, then, come in, my lady wants some. (*She retreats within.*)

SOLDIER. Oh, star of my perdition, rather than northern star of hope ! (*Addressing young man.*) Look here — whatever your name is — do you know the maid who called you from the window, eh ?

SECOND YOUNG MAN. Indeed, I do — but why does Your Grace ask me ?

SOLDIER. She has a pretty face and a lot of charm, eh ?

SECOND YOUNG MAN. Aye, sir, I do agree with you !

SOLDIER. Yes, but I have already vowed that you are not going into that house unless you want me to smash every single bone in your body.

SECOND YOUNG MAN. What do you mean? Can't I go where I'm called ? I must sell my wares.

SOLDIER. (*Brandishing his sword.*) Shut up, — don't answer back — Now, do what I say and quick, too.

SECOND YOUNG MAN. Easy, Señor Soldier, I'm going — I'm going. (*Exit* MANUEL *also on the run.*)

CRISTINA (*at the window.*) Are you not coming in, Manuel ?

SOLDIER. Manuel is gone away, my love.

CRISTINA. Christ ! What a vexatious brute ! What do you want in this street, anyway. Get away from my door. Go away, you fool ! (*Cristina goes indoors.*)

SOLDIER. She's gone, — left me — and so my sun has hid behind the clouds of my despair.

(*Enter a shoemaker, with a pair of new little slippers in his hand. As he tries to go into Cristina's house, he is stopped by the soldier.*)

My good sir, is Your Grace looking for something in this house ?

SHOEMAKER. Yes, I am.

SOLDIER. And whom do you seek, may I ask?

SHOEMAKER. I'm looking for a kitchen-maid who lives in this house to give her a pair of slippers which she ordered me to make for her.

SOLDIER. So, Your Grace is a shoemaker, eh ?

SHOEMAKER. I've frequently made shoes for her.

SOLDIER. And do you intend to try these slippers on her now, eh ?

SHOEMAKER. That's not necessary — if they were men's slippers ; but women's, ah, yes.

SOLDIER. And are these slippers paid for ?

SHOEMAKER. Not yet — she intends to pay me for them now.

SOLDIER. Will Your Grace do me a special favor ? Trust me with these slippers. As security I'll give you some jewels. Only for two days. After that I expect to receive plenty of money.

SHOEMAKER. It's hard to refuse you ! Let's see the jewels. I'm a poor journeyman, mind you, and can't afford to give credit to anyone.

SOLDIER. Look, I'll give Your Grace a toothpick which I hold in great esteem and wouldn't sell for even an escudo. Where is Your Grace's shop whither I may go with money in time to redeem my treasure ?

SHOEMAKER. In the Calle Mayor, in one of the stalls. The name is Juan Juncos.

SOLDIER. Well, well, señor Juan Juncos, here's the toothpick, and value it highly, Your Grace, for remember it is mine.

SHOEMAKER (*examining it.*) Tut, tut ! I expected it to be of gold or silver but this is only a stalk of bishopwood, worth hardly two maravedies — how can Your Grace expect me to consider it worth more ?

SOLDIER. Alas, sinner that I am ! I only meant it as a reminder — for whenever I dig my hand into my pocket and don't find my toothpick, I'll remember that Your Grace has it and then I shall come for it. Indeed, upon a soldier's word, I give it to you only for that reason. But if you are not

pleased with it, I'll throw this sash and these spectacles into the bargain — a good payer never fears to pledge ample security.

SHOEMAKER. Look here, Your Grace, I'm a simple and honest worker. I'd never think of cheating you. You keep your jewelry and valuables and I'll keep my slippers. Simple enough, eh, what !

SOLDIER. How many stitches have they?

SHOEMAKER. Hardly five.

SOLDIER. Alas, slippers of my entrails — I have not six reales to pay for you ! Slippers of my entrails ! Listen, Señor Shoemaker, listen: *Slippers of my entrails* — a most perfect line for a fine poem.

SHOEMAKER. Is Your Grace also a poet?

SOLDIER. Oh, yes, — a most famous one, sir. Let me show you ; listen to this.

(*He sings the song "Slippers of my Entrails"*)

Love is a tyrant, not a dove.
Keep faith in it as heaven above.
But faith in Cristina seems quite in vain;
Dwelling on her may soften the brain.

Little sheaths, your deeds are disdainful
Since softened brains are often painful.
Sole of my head, and heel of my tail
Compose the slippers of my entrail.

SHOEMAKER. Although I'm not well versed in the art of poetry, these lines sound so good that they seem to have been penned by Lope de Vega himself. They say he's responsible for all the things that are or seem to be good.

SOLDIER. Well, sir, since it can't be helped, and you don't trust me with the slippers — take them back to your shop. I'll call for them in two days. But remember for your own health, Shoemaker, do not dare see or talk to Cristina.

SHOEMAKER. I'll remember — O jealousy, jealousy, thy name is Grief !

(*The shoemaker evades the soldier and escapes into Cristina's house without the soldier seeing him.*)

SOLDIER. Unless one becomes a guard, a watchful guard, countless flies will invade the cellar where the wine of felicity is kept. But, hark ! Whose voice is that ? Cristina's ? Indeed, she always sings when she sweeps or scrubs.

(*The high pitched sweet voice of Cristina is heard off stage amid the clatter of dishes.*)

CRISTINA. (*She sings.*)

My darling sacristan of my life,
I am your own Cristina.
To you I'll e'er be a faithful wife —
We'll live together serene - a.

CHORUS. Sing, hey, sing alleluya !

SOLDIER. God, do I have to listen to all that treachery ! That damn sacristan, the darling of her life, eh, I'll kill the scoundrel — the dog —

(*He is about to storm into the house, when he is stopped by the Master of Cristina's house who has just entered.*)

MASTER. Young man, what are you doing here ? What do you want ?

SOLDIER. Who are you to question me ?

MASTER. I ! I am the Master of this house.

SOLDIER. You mean you're Cristina's Master ?

MASTER. That I am.

SOLDIER. (*Pulling out many papers.*) Tarry a while, glance over these papers. This is my military record — twenty - two honorable mentions certified to by as many generals as I fought under. Further down, thirty - four distinctions certified to by as many Grand - Masters as have immortalized themselves by signing them.

MASTER. But, I dare say, there have not been as many generals and Grand - Masters in the whole Spanish army for the last hundred years.

SOLDIER. (*Patting the Master on the back.*) Your Grace, you are a peace loving citizen and know nothing of military affairs whatsoever.

MASTER. All right, I believe you — so what ?

SOLDIER. I want you to associate me with truth personified so that Your Grace will believe more readily what is to follow — I have been offered one of the three castles and

fortresses now vacant in the Kingdom of Naples — namely, Gaeta, Barleta, and Reggio.

MASTER. Even then, what concern is it of mine?

SOLDIER. Indeed, sir, it is.

MASTER. How so ?

SOLDIER. Since I'm getting one of these fortresses, I should like to marry Cristina, then being her husband, I want you to consider me and my huge estates as your own — understand ?

MASTER. I believe Your Grace is slightly mad.

SOLDIER. Is that so? Look here! Give her to me or you'll never enter your house alive.

MASTER. You must be completely mad. Who are you to stop me from entering my own house ?

(*Enter sub-sacristan Pasillas, armed with a huge lid from huge water jar and a very rusty sword. He is accompanied by another sacristan wearing a steel helmet.*)

SACRISTAN. There, friend Grajales, there's the disturber of my peace — the fly in my ointment.

GRAJALES. I regret to have brought along such feeble, — aye, tender arms — I need something heavier to dispatch him the quicker to a sweeter and more distant world.

MASTER. Restrain yourselves, gentlemen ! What are all these calamities and murders you are planning ?

SOLDIER. Scoundrels ! You have to organize yourselves into a band in order to face me ! And even then you try to strike from behind — you cowards! Mock-sacristans, I'll pound you to death even if you belong to as many orders as the Ceremonial !

(*Cristina and her mistress appear at the window.*)

CRISTINA. Madam, madam, come quick, they are killing the Master. More than two thousand swords are striking at him — look how the blades shine — they blind me!

MISTRESS. Is that true, my child ? God help him — May Santa Ursula and her eleven thousand virgins protect him ! Come Cristina, let us rush to his succor.

(*They leave the window and run downstairs.*)

MASTER. Stop, gentlemen — nothing good will come of this quarrel.

SOLDIER. Drop that sword and that lid — don't you

dare awaken my wrath, or I'll cut you into fine chopped hash, eat you up, and then vomit your filthy carcass down the trap door leading to hell.

MASTER. (*Advances at the soldier to stop him.*) Hold your tongues, fool, or you'll regret it. I'm getting angry !

(*Cristina and Mistress come running in breathless.*)

MISTRESS. Alas, poor husband, have they wounded you ?

CRISTINA. Woe is me ! The contestants are my sacristan and my soldier.

SOLDIER. Hurray, she called me *her* soldier — even if she called that dog *her* sacristan.

MASTER. Nothing has happened to me, Madam — but you should know that this feud has been caused by Cristina.

MISTRESS. Alas ! What has my poor Cristina to do with all this ?

MASTER. As I understand it, these two young men are fighting jealously over her.

MISTRESS. Santa Ursula and the eleven thousand virgins ! Is this true, child ?

CRISTINA. Yea, Madam, it is, alas !

MISTRESS. Listen to her shameless avowal — you hussy — has any one of them dishonored you ?

CRISTINA. Yea, Madam, alas !

MISTRESS. Heaven's above, which one !

CRISTINA. The sacristan. He dishonored me — he did it.

MISTRESS. Didn't I tell you, sir, that this sweet child has blossomed into a juicy wench and should not be allowed out of sight for a second. What shall I tell her father, who brought her to us so clean and so pure ? — Where did he dishonor you, you shameless wench ?

CRISTINA. Nowhere in particular, Madam, just there, in midstreet.

MISTRESS. In midstreet !

CRISTINA. Yes, Ma'am — in the very middle of the Calle de Toledo —in the sight of Almighty God and in front of everybody he called me dishonorable, shameless, lecherous, and all sorts of names — all because he was jealous of the soldier.

MASTER. (*With a sigh of relief.*) Is that all ? Are

you sure nothing else took place ? That was all the dishonor — in midstreet, too, I mean ?

CRISTINA. That was all, my Lord, because after that he quieted down.

MISTRESS. (*Recovering.*) Thank God!

CRISTINA. Then he promised to become my husband — and he wrote it down here, in black and white, on this slip of paper — look.

MASTER. Show it to us.

MISTRESS. Read it aloud, husband.

MASTER. Well, here is what it says: "I, Lorenzo Pasillas, sub-sacristan of this parish, do hereby declare that I love the said Señora Cristina de Parrazes, and in testimony whereof I have issued this document, and signed it with my own hand and seal in the presence of God, in Madrid, St. Andrews' Cemetery, this sixth day of May, in the year of our Lord 1611. Witnessed: my heart, my mind, my will and my memory. Signed, Lorenzo Pasellas." (*He sighs.*) It is indeed a very touching marriage contract.

SACRISTAN. Besides declaring my love for her, I include whatever she may like me to do for her — for he who surrenders his will, surrenders all, you know.

MASTER. So, if it were her desire — you would marry her ?

SACRISTAN. Why, certainly.

SOLDIER. If the choice of men depends on her — permit me to say that I am sure— Cristina prefers being the lady of a famous castle than the mistress of a Sacristan — worse — only a sub-sacristan, who needs more than the other half to become a full fledged sacristan.

MASTER. Cristina, do you wish to be married ?

CRISTINA. Indeed I do, sir.

MASTER. Well, then, choose — which of these two pretenders do you prefer ?

CRISTINA. (*With her catching girlish giggle.*) I'm bashful, sir.

MISTRESS. You need not be, darling, for in matters of food and marriage, one should always follow one's own taste rather than obey another's orders.

CRISTINA. Your Graces who brought me up will give me the husband which they consider best — however, I would

like to pick one out for myself — if agreeable to Your Graces.

SOLDIER. Sweetheart, take a good look at me — notice my grace and elegance — I am a soldier, but I'll soon be the Lord of a Castle. Courage has been my virtue since cradle days. I am the most gallant of men ! From the flash of my eye, you can deduce the sterling qualities of my soul !

SACRISTAN. Cristina, my dove, listen to me. I am a musician, a bellman if you wish, but still, an artist — no sacristan living or dead can surpass me in adorning a grave or in decorating a church for the holidays ; and all these duties I can go on fulfilling even after we're married. I'll earn enough so that we can eat bread fit for a prince.

MASTER. So, dear girl, choose your man and thus restore peace between these recalcitrant competitors.

SOLDIER. I'll abide by her decision.

SACRISTAN. And so will I.

CRISTINA (*hesitating coyly.*) Well, in that case, — I choose — the — the — *Sacristan.*

(*Musicians enter with a guitar, etc.*)

MASTER. Good; now call my neighbor, the barber, and let's celebrate the happy engagement with guitars and songs and dances. And as for you, Señor Soldier — you will be our guest of honor ?

SOLDIER. I accept, but not too willingly, because it seems to me that

Wherever supernal edicts exist
Reason and taste will ne'er be missed.

MUSICIANS. Good, we're just in time. We even have a chorus for our song. (*They sing.*)

Wherever supernal edicts exist
Reason and taste will ne'er be missed.

SACRISTAN. (*Sings.*)

Good taste in women is very rare,
To gulls and weasels it does compare.
A soldier's courage they ever ravage
For their taste for gold is almost savage.

MUSICIANS AND CHORUS. (*They sing a chorus.*)

Wherever supernal edicts exist
Reason and taste will ne'er be missed.

SACRISTAN (*sings*).

A soldier's battles will never cease.
He will never learn to win through peace.
Reason and taste he may conquer and fell
While his hat will burst as his head will swell.

MUSICIANS AND CHORUS. (*They all exit singing and dancing the chorus.*)

Wherever supernal edicts exist
Reason and taste will ne'er be missed.

CURTAIN

NIGHT TRAIN

BY ADELE KELLEY THOMPSON

Wooed with rhythm and mated to speed,
Death to the distance its only creed,
The heart unchecked in a dark stampede;

Gunmetal god astride of the plain,
The noise of his breath a hurricane
Under the strands of his smoky mane;

Curbed to the bit of a city's pace,
Where street lights beckon in tiers of space
And flare . . . and die . . . with the populace;

Hurtle and sway on a steel-born trail,
Slicing the dark with dissonant wail
While sparks fan out in a comet's trail;

Marauder that tears the veils of sleep,
The passengers twist . . . and drowse . . . and weep,
And all of them wait for dawn to reap

The night's long harvest, the new day's quest
Of crowded beauty, and mortal jest —
The night train slinks to the yards to rest.

CUCKOLDS GO TO HEAVEN

By *LOPE DE RUEDA*

Translated by ANGEL FLORES. *Adapted by* JOSEPH LISS*

In Rain and Sunshine Cockolds go to Heaven — Old English Proverb.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

LUCIO — *a doctor of medicine*
MARTIN DE VILLALBA — *a simple minded soul, the heavenly Cuckold*

BARBARA — *his wife*
GERONIMO — *a student*

SCENE : *In front of the house of Dr. Lucio in Spain.*
TIME : *1500.*

LUCIO (*depressed.*) Oh, miserablis doctor, oh, despicable wretchedness — paciuntur propter miseriam ! What a horrible business. Not even a single patient all day long ! (*Looking off stage R.*) Oh, curs'd faith — look who's coming to further provoke my sorrow — that poor devil of a fool whose wife carouses and debauches herself with a lusty student who can take the faithless wench on two or three times a day. There's no satisfying her — and yet she makes that candid cuckold of a husband believe that she is sick. But as long as there are young roosters in the barnyard, this wife of ours will keep on being sick — and her temperature will never come down.

(*Enter Martin carrying two chickens, one under each arm.*)

Greetings ! I am happy to see you in my house, but why do you bother to bring all this, brother Martin de Villalba ?

MARTIN. Pardon me, sir, if the chickens are too tiny, but as soon as you cure my wife I'll bring you the goose that is now fattening.

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LUCIO. May God give you health, sir, and your wife, too —

MARTIN. No, no, sir — may God give health to *my wife first.*

LUCIO. (*Calling into the house.*) Ho, there, servants — take in these chickens.

(*Enter servants and remove the restless fowls.*)

(*Dusting himself off.*)

Now tell me, Martin, how did your wife feel last night ?

MARTIN. Oh, very well, sir. She rested a bit. You see, a student, a cousin of hers, slept at my home. And let me tell you, sir, that this student is well versed in the so called art of witchcraft. My wife no longer says, "It pains me here" or "It hurts me there." She's as quiet as a mouse all night.

LUCIO. (*Knowingly.*) I can well believe it.

MARTIN. May God protect us from the Devil, sir.

LUCIO. Oh, I see ! he too is in your home. He too is implicated.

MARTIN. Indeed, sir, had it not been for God in heaven, she would have been dead by now.

LUCIO. Phenomenal ! Is that so — did she drink the purge I prescribed ?

MARTIN. Oh, no, sir! Mama Mia! She couldn't even stand the smell of it. But we found a way to make the medicine do its work anyway.

LUCIO. How so ?

MARTIN. Well, sir, that cousin of hers is very clever. He knows more than the Devil never learned.

LUCIO. So ? What did he do ?

MARTIN. Well, he says to me : Look here, Martin de Villalba, your wife isn't well. That stuff — that purge — nauseates her. She can't possibly drink it. You say you love your wife. You remember when you married her, the Priest told you that you were united unto her in the flesh. Remember, says he. Says I : That's true. Says he : Then if that's true, if what the Priest said be true, if all flesh be one, take this purge yourself and it will do your wife as much good as if she took it.

LUCIO. Yes — and what did you do ?

MARTIN. What did I do ? My Lord ! Hardly had he

finished the last word when the bottle of purge was as cleaned and empty as a peasant's purse. I gulped it all down — glub - glub.

LUCIO. It must have relieved her a lot.

MARTIN. Oh, yes, plenty. That it did — God help us ! But it was I who did not sleep a wink, for my stomach (*He grabs his buttocks with his two hands.*) was *so* sore. As for her, sir, she got up at noon with a hunger fit to eat a whole ox had it been set in front of her.

LUCIO. And so ?

MARTIN. And so, sir, as I could not because of the pains in my flanks, her cousin says to me : "You heartless brute, a little bit of purge, and you act like a cow with diarrhoea!" Then without further ado the young fellow seized a hen by the neck, and in the twinkling of an eye the bird was roasted and cooked and devoured by them in front of my eyes — pronto.

LUCIO. Why, if I had been you, I would have become the third guest . . .

MARTIN. Mama Mia ! I would have liked that, too, but they convinced me that if I ate the luscious fowl I might endanger the health of my wife !

LUCIO. You did wisely if it's *you* we must cure first.

MARTIN. I understand that, sir, but please don't prescribe any more purges. My knees are already too weak. I'm wearing myself down to a frassle — to nothingness. My body is like a sieve. It seems to come out from all sides.

LUCIO. Very well, then, I have several patients to visit today. Go in peace and return tomorrow and with a new medicine that I prescribe you'll soon completely recuperate. You'll be like a new man.

MARTIN. The Lord help us, Sir . . . (*The Doctor goes indoors. Martin de Villalba remains. Enter Barbara, his wife, on an ass, and the student.*)

STUDENT. Zounds ! May nothing ill come near thee ! Señora Barbara, isn't that your husband coming from Doctor Lucio's? I fear he must have seen us! What are we going to do ?

BARBARA. Tush - Tush — fear boys with bugs, fear not him, I'll saddle him in my usual way. I'll make him believe that we are on our way to some shrine to fulfill certain pious

offerings which will benefit my health.

STUDENT. But will he believe it ?

BARBARA. Will he believe it ? Why, he still believes in unicorns and virtuous women. Why, if I were to tell him to jump into a frozen lake in the dead of winter, he would do it even if he drowned. Hush! Here he comes — get rid of him quickly.

STUDENT. Greeting, Señor Martin de Villalba, husband of the Señora my cousin, and the very dearest friend I have.

MARTIN. Greetings, dear cousin. I'm happy indeed to see your smiling countenance. But where are you hurrying to ? And who is the fair lady in the veil on that she-ass, that bearer of brides ? (*Martin attempts to reveal the lady under the veil. The student stops him.*)

STUDENT. Pray, sir, leave her alone — don't you dare touch her ! She's only the poor washerwoman from the boarding school.

MARTIN. Is that so ? —

STUDENT. Upon my soul that's the God's truth ; why should I lie to you ? . . .

MARTIN. I believe you — you're not guilty — but don't do it again — and where are you taking her ?

STUDENT. To the house of some pious women who are to teach her a prayer for curing headaches.

MARTIN. Are you sure that you're not making fun of me, eh ?

STUDENT. Not on your life — not for the world !

MARTIN (*leaving.*) Well, goodby. I hope you'll have a fine trip. And you can count on me if you need anything.

STUDENT. Thank you. I don't need anything just now. May God give you health !

MARTIN. (*He is almost gone.*) As you wish . . . (*He leaves.*)

BARBARA. Great and little scorpions — that was close. He didn't recognize me ! Spur on the ass — quickly !

MARTIN. (*Suddenly returning in a furor.*) Wait a minute — you whoreson ass — you devil incarnate — either I don't see aright or that's my wife's skirt. (*Looking close and smelling the material.*) It is hers ! Hey, where are you taking her ?

BARBARA. (*Revealing herself — Yelling at Martin.*)

You traitor ! So this is how you recognize your own wife. Your own dear wife you meet in the street and you don't even know her.

MARTIN. (*Apologetic and differential.*) Hush! Don't cry! Don't break my heart! I promise I'll recognize you from now on whenever I meet you — but tell me, where are you going ? Will you return soon, my love ?

BARBARA. Yes, I'll be back very soon. I'm just going to hold a novenary to a saint for whom I have very deep devotion.

MARTIN. A novenary ? What's that ?

BARBARA. Don't you know, you fool. A novenary means that I'll have to shut myself up for nine days.

MARTIN. (*Alarmed.*) Without coming home, my sweet ?

BARBARA. (*Sweetly.*) Without coming home, my dove !

MARTIN. (*To student.*) You did upset me, you rascal — you made my blood boil like a hell - broth.

BARBARA. But wait, one thing is essential. You must promise me that while I am gone you must perform a very important duty for my health.

MARTIN. And what's that, dear wife of my heart ?

BARBARA. During the nine days that I'm away, you are to observe a strict diet so that *we* may benefit the better. I myself will only eat bread and water.

MARTIN. I shall be delighted to fast for you, my heavenly darling. Fare ye well.

BARBARA. Good - bye and take good care of the house.

MARTIN. My wife, worry no longer about your health. The Doctor told me that he would cure *me* — and so *you,* God be blessed, are already on the road to recovery.

STUDENT. Farewell, brother Martin de Villalba, may Heaven keep you !

MARTIN. Farewell, guardian of my wife. Remember to give her the right kind of advice. Treat her kindly. If the novenary is not enough to cure her, make her take a decenary — ten days in holy worship — I don't mind fasting an extra day.

STUDENT. I'll work hard on her — farewell.

MARTIN. God be with you! (EXEUNT.)

CURTAIN

"I WILL NOT HAVE IT SO"

By HARRIET PLIMPTON

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

ELI REED — *The Father*
LYDIA REED — *The Mother*
ELI — *The Oldest Son*
ALFRED — *The Next Son*
AUGUSTUS — *The Youngest Son*
DELIA — *Augustus' Wife*
OTHERS

TIME — 1820 - 1910
PLACE — *A Village in New England*

I.
AND ELI REJOICES

And Eli waiting by the door rejoiced,
Yet quivering, weak now it was ended,
The child born and the mother safe.
He never was sure till he saw them
He dared believe all was well.
He heard steps approaching, his hands cold as wood
On some white pile in winter that will not warm again
Until the arms of fire have turned its sap to gold.
The door was open and the midwife laughing, to see him,
A big man like a child shrunk to himself with fear.

THE MIDWIFE.

Now you may see them. Come.

ELI.

And Lydia?

THE MIDWIFE.

Well. I told you once.
She was made to be a mother.
The babe is perfect
As all your children.
And here is your little daughter.
I'll go out as usual.

ELI.

Please, Sally.
Lydia, I see a look of you already.
No, don't laugh, it's true.
I hope she will be like you.
I could wish her nothing better.
You have been a staff
Blossoming in my hand;
All lean on you and see courage flower.
All this village comes for you when trouble
Has frozen hope dead
And the heart is a stone.
You will go on in her to make lives strong.
I am glad to have a girl at last.

LYDIA.

I am like any wave that rolls to shore.
There are a million of us just alike.

ELI.

No, some are lovelier,
With a rainbow crowning them.

LYDIA.

A rainbow because of sun —

ELI.

And that is love.

LYDIA.

Your love, Eli, that God has sent.

ELI.

Our love, dear one, yours and mine.
He has been good — the boys, this child and you,
This house I built as perfect as I could,
And all the forges glowing in our mills,
Blazing for us and whatever is to come.
Now I know that God approves our dream,
That fragment He hath given us to weave
To the woof of His Desire. Let us give thanks.

LYDIA.

And especially for children, so straight,
So strong. We have been blessed, so blessed.

ELI.

Lord of the Heavens, the fields and the stars,
We thank Thee for mercy and love;
This child and its mother safe from birth peril,
This daughter so longed for and three strong sons.
Grant us to serve Thee as Thou hast commanded.
May this child be also Thy true handmaiden.
And, Death's wings folded, the journey o'er,
May we live forever with Thee,
All grief laid by and pain a stranger
Like the ugly shell of a locust,
Where the soul grew lonely for God.
The glorious host will sing hosannas
In the light of a thousand suns
That are dim beside Thy Face,
That are dim beside Thy Face.
Lord, I am glad, I am glad. Amen.
Lydia, my dear one, my dearest.

II.
OUT OF THE EAST COMES RAIN AS WELL AS SUN.

The gold blue fire of August crisped the fields,
And the air was hot as a kiln. Only the house
Went on with the order best its own
Before the heat began, for women being
Gods themselves, shaping life from seed,
Persist in their own laws, ice or fire.
So all the work of Saturday was done.
Why should men scamp, no matter what the weather,
When there is work to do that sets the stone
For what is yet to come, the weather gone?
Lydia placed the last pie on the table
And turned to ring the bell that brought them all
To the youngest 'prentice flocking to be fed.
She'd just stepped out the door, her hand upraised
When a child screamed from the stable,
One scream, then stopped, stopped dead.
She never remembered running —
She found herself on the floor back of the horses,

Her son's head on her arm, the brightest, Gus,
His hair spiked to thorns of blood, the horse
That kicked him snorting, to breathe that raw bright smell.
And men like strangers, crowded, as strange
As dead men are, so does the shadow of death
Freeze in eyes and lips the one great fear,
The child was still alive.
That was all the mother asked. She would,
With her very breath, give that coldness life;
Clasp Death himself to warm the child she held.
And when she had seemed to win, then would she come
To find her God far colder than even those arms.

THE DOCTOR.

This injury to the skull —

ELI.

He?

THE DOCTOR.

He may not reach full stature.

THE MOTHER.

I will not have it so, I will not have it so!

III.
THE STONE IN THE FURROW.

The day was the best that winter —
The world one blast of light,
Everything smooth with ice,
Bright on the snow and fences.
Bright on the slopes of the hills,
And the trees a crystal wood
Where the loveliest dreams might walk.
The air was cold as water
Thrown by a friend at the spring
When you stoop to drink and he splashes you.

YOUNG ELI.

Come, let's get out the sled.
We can go a mile on this ice.
We'll go down Laban's Hill.
Yes, we'll take the new sled.
Hannah, Alfred, come.

I'll be ready before you are.
S - h - h! Stop shouting so loud.
We'll out this door, out here.

HANNAH.

I'm ready before you are.

YOUNG ELI.

Oh, your hood's not tied.
Alfred, come on, hurry!

HANNAH.

I am ready, so there!

YOUNG ELI.

S - h - h! Stop talking so loud.
Why'd you speak so loud?
I hear him. Hurry!

GUS (*coming running*).

Here, you take me too!
Eli, take me too!

YOUNG ELI.

Now you've done it, Hannah.
No! There's only room for three.
Go on, go back in the house.

GUS.

Mother, they don't want me.
Mother, make them take me.
Mother, mother!

HANNAH.

Pshaw! I'll take him.

YOUNG ELI.

Then you'll go alone.
Come on, Fred, let's run.

LYDIA.

Boys, come here this minute.
The sled is just as much his.
Coast on out in the pasture;
Laban's Hill's too long,
Laban's Hill's too steep.
The wind's too sharp for Gus;
Coast on out in the pasture.
You might think of your brother.

The sled is just as much his.
Your sister, she remembered.

Not one word was spoken
As they walked up the pasture hill,
A hill for little boys,
Where Gus would hit every bump
No matter how you showed him.

YOUNG ELI.
Fred and I'll go down first.

FRED.
Come, we can all get on.

Gus began to cry,
The way he always did.

HANNAH.
I will take Gus down.
Mother would tell me to.

FRED.
Go on, Eli, let them.

YOUNG ELI.
What? My new sled?

HANNAH.
It's ours. Mother said so.

FRED.
I'll let them go on my part.

Eli said no more.
He threw the rope to Hannah
And went white as the snow.

YOUNG ELI.
See that you steer then, Hannah.

GUS.
Hannah, let me steer.

YOUNG ELI.
You'll break the sled.

HANNAH.

We'll both steer;
I can manage.

YOUNG ELI.

Do as I say, Hannah!

But they were off,
Both of them trying to steer.
Roar, bump, bump of the runners,
And crash in a tree at the bottom
That sent down a shower of snow
From the dark green of its arms;
And they had broken the sled.

YOUNG ELI.

Gus isn't hurt, Hannah;
He's scratched his face, that's all.
Take the sled and go home.

He went off by himself
And Alfred took them home.

Eli made a sled
For himself and Alfred.

YOUNG ELI.

This I made, and it's mine.
It's stronger than the other.
Alfred can fix up the old one
And let Gus and Hannah use it.
This is my own sled.
I made it just like the old one.
That was the prettiest and fastest
I ever saw in my life.

HANNAH.

Go on and coast without me.
I won't coast with Gus either,
Not unless Mother makes me,
On that old sled,
Patched and botched on the front.
The paint doesn't match.

It was the prettiest sled
I ever saw in my life.
I'm not going to cry, I won't.
Eli, hateful thing.

FRED.

I don't think it looks so bad.
I couldn't get the right paint.
They couldn't coast with us.
I don't see what more I could do.

GUS.

They've left us this old thing to coast on,
An old broken sled.
I have as much right as they
To ride on a brand new sled.

LYDIA.

They might look after their brother;
He has as much right as they.

THE FATHER.

Let him do what he can do.
He's just slower, that's all.

IV.
THOSE HAPPY DAYS WE ENVY LOOKING AT THE YOUNG.

THE HOUSEHOLD.

Let Eli do it; he can.
Let Alfred do it; he can.
Let Hannah do it; she can.
Gus, that isn't right;
Can't you see?
It isn't right.

THE TEACHER.

No, this isn't right.
No, this isn't right.
No, this isn't right.
Stay till you get it right.
Stay till you get it right.
You never seem to be right.

V.

"RED IN THE MORNING — "

Gus was going away; he'd read of gold in the West.
Now was the chance to show them he was as good as they —
Eli, foreman for father; Alfred studying law;
Hannah just like Mother. He was as good as they.
He'd have more than them all if they piled it up together —
Horses and clothes and a wife; they'd come to him for a loan.
He'd never had such a party — but they didn't invite the neighbors.
His mother cried when he left her — he'd never seen her cry.
His mother loved him best; and they all had seen her cry.

HANNAH.

Well, he's gone, poor Gus.
There's nothing he'll ever find
Without us to help him find it.

YOUNG ELI.

So Gus thinks he'll find gold.
There's nothing he'll ever find
But to bungle where he's not wanted.

ALFRED.

So Gus has gone away?
What'll he do without Mother
And Hannah to fend for him?

THE FATHER.

Let Gus prove himself
Like any other man.
He might carry his load
If no one was there to pity.
The goodness of women has stifled
Many a better man.
O God, grant that my seed
Will not dishonor my blood.

THE MOTHER.

O Lord, protect my boy,
Shelter him in Thy bosom
And bring him to me again,
Safe to my arms again.

VI.

THERE ARE STRANDS SURER THAN ANY HEMP THAT GROWS.

Young Eli sang; he had a letter —
His old master wrote him men like him
Were needed to heal the sick. He had been sure
Before. In lambing time his father'd said
He'd rather have him with the panting ewes
Than anyone. Now he was doubly sure.
He knew how this man measured truth and spared
No feelings; he'd not set wings to any plough horse.
Suddenly Eli's song stopped mid-phrase,
As the shadow of the years smote his face to age.
Pray not to see ahead. Pray not to see ahead.
What would his father say?
He saw the letter quiver in that hand.
The hand gestured now to the house on the hill.
"There is a work, Eli.
Without you that will go,
The mills closed when I die.
Who can hold this but you?
And there's your mother,
Grief-shuttered in her house.
Don't take light away,
For the blackest darkness
Is what we've made ourselves."
"I'll do what you have asked."
The son took the letter and left.
He didn't come back till night.
It was never mentioned again;
And Young Eli was old.
He never laughed free again.
A man can't fool himself when he gives up what he is.
There's no excuse, however sane, that hides what ought to be.
Rowing cross-current will wear the strongest out.
There's no use doing the thing that shouldn't be.
Over fifty years the letter lay in his desk,
Where living hands found it, routing out his things.
Death has his way with all things hidden.

Leave no trace of heartbreak, leave no written word,
Ring or rose or locket if you want to cover
Things unspoken with you, things nobody knows.
See that they are buried and left unmarked.
See they are grown over by flowers they did not seed.

VII.
IF FROST HOLDS OFF —

The wagons rumbled out with knives for markets
West and South.
Creaking the dusty miles to where the railroad came;
And the survey stakes rotted where lines once were run
Close to Eli's mills. That was his first mistake;
And no fault of his own. Even so, all the forges
Glowed and blazed to the hammers, and the pulleys chattered and sang;
For honor was forged in the goods and men knew what they bought.
The son's strength was in them, bound to his duty and power,
And now to the love of a girl.
She was sweet as May in the woods,
As the clearest spring in the pasture,
As raspberries under their leaves;
And strong within her heart
As sweetfern roots in the ground.
And when she sang
The heart grew still
It was so sure of God.
She was welcome as lilacs
After winter has gone.
They gave him land near by,
And helped him build his house.
Alfred had gone away.
They read over and over
A clipping he had sent them,
The words of a great judge
Praising Alfred Reed —
"Wisdom and Honor
Are his familiar friends."
Surely all this brightness would whiten any cloud.

YOUNG ELI.

Glorious the sun will rise
And joyous be one's strength.
Strength will grow in the morning
And happy be the noon.
Glad the noon shall be.

THE FATHER.

Behold the goodness of life.
The ears of grain are full,
The seed will reach full harvest —
Surely — in God's good time.

HANNAH.

I have praise here.
I follow God's will.
My power flows uncurbed,
Placing all where it belongs
In the pattern of a household,
A pattern that revolves
As perfectly as time.
Love, what is love!
I have no need of love.

THE MOTHER.

The same stars are over the West
That burn beyond this hill,
The same God reigneth —
He will hear my prayer.

VIII.

FOR WINDS WILL BLOW THAT TWIST THE STRONGEST TREE.

Hannah sat at the hearthstone
And heard one workman sing;
Jean Loubière, his fiddle laid aside.
All crowded to hear him;
This was a different music
From the music of old hymns.
Lydia's eyes sparkled, and Eli breathed again
Full and deep, the stone rolled away.
The sun was shining on a lake

And the new leaves of Spring.
Now he sat singing —

"Comme je t'aime, ma chère;
Tu es le printemps,
Le beau printemps."

Head thrown back and singing,
Dark eyes moist,
Light from the fire playing
On that gay face,
Light flecking the hands
And the thighs half in shadow.
Then one night as Lydia neared the door,
She heard his voice laughing, "I tink from what you say
Thees goose called Gus, he waddle home again
When ze fox bite hees tail and hees neck."
Eli heard too and read his wife's face.
"Let him sing, Lydia; we don't want talk."
Didn't want talk! Couldn't he stop that talk!
Apprentices laughing at Gus!
After one song Jean looked direct at Hannah
And saw Lydia's face stiff with hate,
Before he kissed his hand as he would that night,
(Zees Puritans, zey were human too!)
Like every *gentilhomme* singing in company
With a *jeune fille* there, such a coquette,
Laughing at the men, with those bright eyes.
He would make them soften; he had tamed wild birds.

LYDIA.

Eli, all this singing of these songs,
Is most unseemly
And the playing of the fiddle
For low dance tunes.

ELI.

Youth is time for song.
It makes the heart younger.
To be happy is right.
The boys stay home to listen,
All the young men.
We know where they are.

LYDIA.

And young girls too.

ELI.

We were young once

LYDIA.

How'd you like your daughter
In the arms of a Frenchman,
Low idolater, child of Devil's spawn?

ELI.

Lydia!

LYDIA.

Oh, I saw that look.

ELI.

Lydia, she was happy.
She has not much gladness.

LYDIA.

She has not much gladness!
Is not this her home?
You call that gladness,
Mating in the dark?

ELI.

You shall not foul our daughter
With words like those.

LYDIA.

Words like those you call it?
There'll be no more such words.
I'll send him packing —
Hannah, Hannah!

ELI.

Be still.

LYDIA.

Oh, I know how to do it —
I'll not tell her.
Hannah, Hannah!

HANNAH.

How I liked the singing!
Mother, you smiled.

LYDIA.

He is going tomorrow.

HANNAH.

Mother!

LYDIA.

I'll have no Devil's songs,
Bringing that look.

ELI.

Let me do this.

LYDIA.

I'll not have it —
Low common songs
From a low half-Indian. —

HANNAH.

He isn't!

ELI.

Daughter, be still.

LYDIA.

So you set him up
Against your own mother!

HANNAH.

Well, he's something different
In this great house.

LYDIA.

Something different in this great house!
So it's "difference" you want?
You'll find the "difference"
When you're big with child.

HANNAH.

Mother, that's a lie!

LYDIA.

Eli, Eli!

HANNAH.

Mother!

ELI.

Lydia, be still.
The child has not done that.
Hannah, leave the room.

LYDIA.

You'll send him packing,
Or else I will.

ELI.

In the morning
I'll let him go.
Lydia, stop.

Hannah, hot with shame,
Rushing from her father
Up to her room,
Hearing Jean still, singing beside her,
Seeing her mother, with lips twisted thin.
She sat on her bed, cold as death,
Watching the Dipper and the soft night stars.
She knew an orchard where she used to go
When her mother seemed to be on all sides, pressing close.
She went there now.
As she rounded the stable,
Jean himself was smoking,
Humming to the stars.
He caught her and kissed her.
He'd tame this bird
With one little kiss
All old precepts
Were brittle as leaves
Against the rush of Spring
In a hot May night.
She was molded to his body
As water over stone
Or as fire twined in fire,
And she felt no shame
For this thing was older
Than the trees or the hills.
Then she wept, and he laughed.
"So, *ma chérie,* you love me, yes ?"
"Yes, Jean, yes. Take me with you."
"But I'm not going."
"My mother — "
"You'll not tell her."
"She said she'd make you go."
"Why? I look at you?"
"Yes, you look at me.

Take me with you.''
''How can I, going so quick?''
''I'll be ready.''
''Let me come in the Spring.
I'll come, I swear, *chérie.*
I will come in the Spring.''
They heard a sound
And she fled to the house.
In the Spring came some one
Who had heard of Jean.
Oh, he had done right;
He had married Marie,
Très belle, who had borne him a son.

''Lord, I am glad. I sinned.
Thou didst save me, Lord.''
But Hannah wept
Till the moon was dead.
''Devil's Hall,'' she called it
When she was old
And people took to dancing
Instead of church.
She watched young couples
To see where they went.

Then came Emanuel Rivers, so worthy and so sure.
''He will go far,'' men said; famed as a preacher now,
And only twenty-two. He was sure of God as the young are
When their hearts are touched by Jesus, and certain of
God's ways.
He knew so many reasons he would need to have great faith.
For him the day was God and his work for God, the sun.
The morning star appeared,
And it was Hannah.
He was so young, so sure
He never even thought
A girl could refuse.

EMANUEL.

God would have us wed.
Your parents consent,

And I love you.

So this was the proper proposal,
The parents approving, the man on his knees.
She covered her face, her laughter choked her
With one great sob.

EMANUEL.

I'll go get your mother.

HANNAH.

No, Emmanuel, no.

EMANUEL.

You love me.

HANNAH.

No, Emmanuel, no.

EMANUEL.

But God has said
You will be my bride.

HANNAH.

How does He tell you that?

EMANUEL.

I have prayed and peace came over me
When I asked if you were His Will.

HANNAH.

Poor boy, what will happen
When you awake?
Two must hear God's word
For marriage; if not for love.
I have not heard that word —
I'm afraid I have not even prayed
To have you.

EMANUEL.

But I love you, Hannah. I do!
I do! I —

HANNAH.

Hush, you will never love
Anyone besides yourself — and God, of course.
I don't love you, Emanuel.
God's Will and our poor human love
Are not the same.
Blasphemy?

Well, you'll never learn
Life is a Bible, too,
Unless, perhaps, I've cracked that shield
Of "ought to be" and "ought to be"
You cling to, to hide you from what is.
I doubt it. You will make your own world.
It never will be God's.
Queer, you must shed tears for love, poor boy —
For what you think is love.
Perhaps it is — for you.
You must go now.
The stars are out.
They will appear tomorrow night,
And the next. You'll see them.
Goodbye.

Gethsemane, Gethsemane!
He thought he too had passed through that.

Hannah laughed once, folding the ironing away.
Her mother'd kept asking him in;
She'd feel she was not so cold, her daughter a minister's wife,
Somehow, as if God approved what she had done in life.
Hannah was her own mistress. That was more than love,
More and more her mother letting her run the house.
Wholeness seems to lie in power in oneself.
There is power in being the shaft driving the wheel.
There is power in feeding, warming, clothing the home,
In being fire unceasing for food and life,
Even the womb barren and no child one's own.
Pride is a smooth ointment to keep a sore cool.
Emanuel was skim-milk; Jean, strong as a stag.
That Balaam's ass prating about God's Will!
She would as soon go to bed with tongs!
Prating about God's Will and love in a breath together!
She could tell him of love:
It was a forest fire;
It was a storm in the maples,
And the northeast wind beating
At every loosened clapboard

Until a strip gave way and the wind entered the house,
Throwing a door open, a cold blast on the stairs.
In her heart the fire burned.
Yet she knew a coldness that never would be warm —
That was the Will of God.
She broke into a hymn —
"Let me bring my cross to Thee,
Raise me by Thy wondrous love — "
The song choked. She lifted her head,
Her neck rigid as roots of trees,
Storm - stiffened, holding.
Gasping, she began the verse again,
And she made the words come clear
Till they rang at the end of the hymn.
"Yes, I shall see Thy glory
When the story's done."

IX.
WHERE MOTHER WAS.

Gus was back, he had come back.
Three years. And he had no gold.
He got sick, he said; the climate . . . .
His brothers laughed, but his father
Sat long that night, staring into the fire.
And no comfort came. He knew a night set in,
Where no sun would rise, no star shine.

ELI AND THE FATHER.

Let him look somewhere else;
There's not enough for three.
With Eaton's underselling
We just can hold our own.
Let him be man enough
To do what a man should do.
Men stand by what they make.

THE MOTHER.

But he didn't make what he is.
We have no right to throw
Aside the trials of God.
He's our son. He's my boy.

We must protect our own.
There *is* enough for three.

AUGUSTUS.

I have as good a right as Eli.
This is my home, too;
As much as it is his,
Or Hannah's or anybody's.

HANNAH.

There *is* enough for all;
We can manage him.

X.

FIRE DEEP TO THE ROOTS WILL SURELY KILL.

Augustus had gone courting
And brought them home his wife.
They built an ell to his father's
To watch Eli next door —
To see what Eli got,
What Eli did
As his father's manager.
Delia was a match in craft
For anything that ever lived.
Craft kept her folk alive;
Lacking strength to use what tools they had,
They gained craft, by dulling others' tools.
Augustus wedded what he lacked
To make men watch him, too.
For he had wedded hatred
Unconfused by rules
On how kinsfolk should feel.
There is no battle stallion-waged
So deadly as the war between
A woman and her husband's kin.
She saw how Eli had his father's trust.
She saw how his strong hand made all things go,
How he was hub and Gus a rattling spoke.
She saw how Eli's son was sweet as corn,
And looked upon her own two dullards
So like the brood she'd come from.
She felt the mother and Hannah watching,

Watching to see how she kept house.
They tried to tell her ways she'd never known
In that thriftless house where she was born.
She had not love enough to stand correction.
She'd stop his running to his mother.
He talked more than "business," she knew that.
That old woman looking at her, looking.
Delia'd show them Gus belonged to her.
She nourished all her house at hatred's breast.
She had her pride. She had married Gus.
They should not scorn him; she'd not married for that,
Out of William's Hollow. The proud Reeds —
Every brick in their house perfect,
Passed through Old Eli's hands —
Telling her and her husband how to save,
Hannah saying she wasted flour.
It was true. She'd never learned to skimp,
Thank God, not even hate.

DELIA.

Eli's wife has a new dress,
She didn't save that on cooking,
They're planning college for their son —
That comes of handling money.
He pushes like his father.
Augustus isn't allowed to keep
The books — he makes mistakes.
Augustus "irritates" the hands;
He can't be foreman.
He "irritates" them, does he?
He can't deliver goods;
He can't drive horses.
They always try to run away;
His hand's too nervous on the lines.
He'd better make it harsher somewhere else!
The Reed name has begun to suffer —
That name, that precious name of theirs —
It's common talk among the neighbors,
Seeing a partner, a brother too,
Put down so.

HANNAH.

He ought to be allowed to manage —
I guess he could if he'd a chance.
If Old Man Lipscomb hadn't hated him
For years he'd have no trouble with the men.
Gus only mocked his half-wit son just once;
You can't tell *me* the others didn't.
Lipscomb wouldn't take orders from Old Nick!
He might learn to drive a horse. I can.
It doesn't look well in the village
To see a brother put down so.
And I can help him with the books.

ELI.

Don't interfere.

HANNAH.

He'd do better if his wife cooked better.
I've tried to show her.

ELI.

Don't interfere.

HANNAH.

We can't have such goings on, we can't!

ELI.

Don't interfere.
I'll swing it. I will, I will.
Let Delia raise her feathers; she's just a hen.

HANNAH.

Well, she has her rights —
And so has Gus; he's your brother.

ELI.

Hannah, you know I'll not deny
Them either one their rights,
Nor any man.
But I'll not let a hen or cock
With half a comb scatter the fire
I'm keeping — that our father lit
To warm us all.
Remember, Hannah, to warm you, too.

THE MOTHER.

Eli is so strong; how could Gus hurt?

Poor boy, with his wife, he needs our love now.
She has stolen him, she - devil, that I gave my life to.

THE FATHER.

We can't wait for Gus; we'd lose then sure.
But Eli'll see us through and Hannah in the house.
Eli, Eli, forgive me. O God, forgive me, God,
The injustice I have wrought.
Who could have thought a father
Could injure so a son,
Yielding to the pain
In the eyes he loved?

XI.
THE END.

When Eli stepped in the room Delia knew he'd found out.
She hurriedly moved the pots and pans,
Took off the stove lid and bent to get some wood,
Hiding her face in work.
Her husband hid in his paper.
We try to hide our eyes, the peep - holes to ourselves
We carry all our lives.
Eli stepped close beside her, and held out his wallet.
"Delia, where's the money? I left my coat here."
"You shan't speak that way to my wife."
"Gus, he can't prove a thing. Keep still.
What of your own thieves?"
"You shall not lead me off.
We're finished now, did you know it?
Corson's note is due today. We can't meet it."
"You have grace."
"But it's up."
"I thought it said — "
"So you read my letters, too?"
"They're Gus's as much as yours.
We've as good a right as you."
"You're not in the firm, remember.
Let me have that money, Delia."
"I never had it."
"Yes you did."
"You doubt my wife's word?"

"Gus, you're out of this."
"That's just it —
You've kept him out of everything you could.
You won't let him touch the money
Or see the books."
"That's not so; he saw the books
A week ago, didn't you, Gus?"
"He saw what you chose to show him."
"Didn't you, Gus?"
"I saw what you showed me."
"And that was all there was. You know it.
But we're through now; it's bankruptcy
Unless you give me the money."
"I haven't got it."
"Poor father."
"Wife, let him have the money."
"I haven't it, you fool;
I haven't it, do you hear?"

HANNAH.

You always were a liar and slovenly to boot.
Now you are a thief.

DELIA.

I'm not the only thief.

HANNAH.

You lie.

DELIA.

Nor the only liar.

ELI.

Well, it's done.
Now I'll go on alone.
I'm strong enough; I'll do it.

HANNAH.

If you'd listened to me
You'd watched your money better.

ELI.

There's been too much of watching
In this house.

HANNAH.

Do you mean me?
I've never done a thing but try to help!

ELI.

If you had the world
You'd comb the trees
And brush the sky,
And who would thank you?
Neither trees nor sky.
Only wise men can be helped,
Not fools.
And wise men are their own best help —
With God.

ELI'S SON, DAVID.

I'll work and get where I want to.
I'm strong, I can do it alone.
Father will let me go.
There never was a father
As good as mine.

AUGUSTUS' SON, JACOB.

So Dave's going to college, is he?
I wonder how much *he* stole?

THE MOTHER.

It was that wicked woman;
He listened so to her.
My days will end in weeping
To see what she has done.

THE FATHER.

Lord, my God, forgive me
The havoc I have wrought,
Hoping to prop the grief
By Eli's strength,
Wanting Lydia's eyes
To look as they used to look.
Now too late I learn
How love destroys a man
Who gives up even manhood
For one dear face.

XII.
THERE IS JUST ONE WAY FOR A MAN WHO IS BRAVE.

In the mills alone, an old man working —

Young Eli, old —
Turning handles, forging blades,
Tying parcels, delivering
To a few. He even got
Some new trade. You'd hear
One hammer, clink, clink, clink
On one forge; and hear one bellows
Sough in that hollow room.
There is no room so empty
As a room where once men were.
He never whistled.
Clink, clink, clink,
And then the rattle of the belts,
The pulleys, and the buzzing of the lathe.
He never labeled or tried to sell
A knife that wasn't perfect
As he or any living soul
Could make —
And paid a thousand dollars in debts
The year before he died.
One hot August day they found him
Lying by the forge,
Where the stroke took him,
Keeping whole, as he had,
Clear through it all,
The man he was.

XIII.
ONE WAVE AFTER ANOTHER WILL BRING THE SAME STICK BACK.

Years have a way of washing
Like water caught in the rocks,
In and out and drably
With twigs and scum and foam.
Death swoops down like a hawk
Out of the clearest sky,
And now Hannah lived alone
With only Augustus left.
For what are sons and their wives

But a turn to old trouble?
Only David was kind
But he was far away,
And his wife couldn't stand Aunt Hannah,
Who wanted to see women work
No matter how they felt.
His wife couldn't stand a place
Where the stain of long hate
Worked through any paint.
Hannah sat with Augustus
And kept them both alive,
Selling the wood-lots and fields
Till his son came and damned her
For "stealing" his heritage.
He was bound he'd have it,
He'd a right to have it,
Not goddamned Dave in the city;
And Hannah sat and listened,
Seeing his mother in him
And the worst blood of her own.
She was afraid and alone.
She gave him part of the place,
Taking from David's share.
The gentle inherit nothing.
That anyone buys or sells.
Day after day Augustus
Moaned over the old,
Then he'd sleep in that still house,
And she'd go out to call.
But the old are never welcome
Unless they share new ways.

XIV.

WHY SHOULD ONE REMEMBER A THING THAT IS OLD?

"Be sure of it, just at dinner time
Along comes Hannah Reed
To see what she can see.
She looks just like a witch.

What do you suppose makes her delve
In their garden the way she does?''
''Maybe it saves hiring.''
''But there's Augustus to work.''
''They say his heart is bad.''
''Pshaw, I don't believe it.''
''It might be; he is eighty.''
''Look at the dress she has on,
Bedrabbled up to the knees.''
''No one starches for gardening,
And she's part blind, I hear.''
''Well, take that cake off the table
Since you're so kind and wise.
I won't have her tell the neighbors
What this cake is like.''
''Why, I thought you were all through dinner.
No, thank you, I'll have nothing;
I'll just sit right here.
You have a pretty hot fire.
I like a slow fire for baking.
No. My eyes are worse.
I cleaned today. Got up at five.
I'm pretty tired by night.
Gus can't do much, poor boy.
There goes Laura's girl.
I should think Laura was crazy
To let her dress that way.
I guess any boy could —
Thunderstorm? Oh, thunderstorm —
Yes, it was heavy. The clouds rolled
Low. I never saw them blacker.
But the Lord is in the lightning
As well as in the rose;
He is here though all else goes.
Into Death we all will pass
Like breath on a square of glass
'To rise on that happy shore
Where there is no parting more.'
I think of it every day
And in the morning hours

Before the sun appears
When the sky is dull and cold
Like a heart worn by years
Or granite in the dew,
I think of that happy day
On 'a green hill far away.'
They will all, all be there.
And all will be as it might be
If the world had stayed fair.
Well, it's time to be going."
"Oh, don't hurry, don't hurry."
"Lordie, Gus will need me;
I must go alone —
What ails me, I wonder —
Go along, along."
"Now we can eat in peace."
"It's a terrible thing to be old,
To remind people today
Will be their yesterdays,
Fearing what they'll become."

XV.

THERE IS A FRIEND UNFAILING TO ONE WHO IS OLD.

Then even Augustus was gone,
Complaining in death still.
Then she sat alone in the house,
Hearing the shadows creep.
One after one they had died,
Even David and all;
And most had died in her arms.
Now she worked alone,
Quavering hymns to herself,
Talking out loud to her dead.
She was sure they had gathered about her.
She even saw them at times —
Father, Mother, Eli,
And Jean, who was always young.
He never would stay,
Even in dreams.
She did alone for herself.

The courage she'd always known
Her heart knew still.
The house was folded about her
With the dead, who'd liked her ways.
Time had stopped at last.
"Lord, I have known Thy winter,
The heat of August and lightning —
Thy fiery hot furnace
To temper the hearts of men.
I have known Thy seasons in full
Except for seed of my womb.
Care was my child and I nursed it.
Strength I asked and Thou gavest it,
Holding me safe in Thy arms
That have carried me through the storms.
Thou hast dried my tears with Thy mantle.
Strength hast Thou ever given me
For the task Thou madest mine.
I have lived to see the others
Safe on Thy loving breast.
Lord, I shall join them again —
All that I have loved,
All that I have loved.
Thou hast not failed me, Lord."
"Pity," the neighbors said;
"She has nothing left to be proud of
Except her power to endure."
"Marvel," the neighbors said,
As she struggled to fend for herself
Even to the last bite,
Even to the last sup.
But they found no word at all
When she went to Death like a bride.

XVI.

SOME PLANTS, ALL BLOSSOMS BLIGHTED, HAVE STILL ONE BLOOM.

THE PREACHER.

Our dear Sister is with God
And those dear ones she loved.

Ended is her journey;
And over Zion's shore,
Safe she rests forever
In the bosom of our Lord.
No more tears or being alone.
We thank Thee, Lord, we shall remember
Her courage over tears.

HER OLDEST FRIEND.

Hannah wasn't the crying kind.
He never saw her cry.
'No one but a fool,' she said,
'Could think God was easy.
What'll he think,' she said,
'When he burns his fingers
On the justice that is God,
That terrible sweet justice
That men call God?'
How could she call it sweet?
She must have learned to love it,
The cross that scarred her hands.
Did she never feel forgotten
In the long night hours?
She must have known Faith.
I liked to hear her pray;
No cringing there.
She did not veil her eyes,
But stood before her God.
How could she call it 'sweet'?
She must have known He loved us,
And trusted to His Son.
Had she ever known a love
That did not scar the breast
On its way to fulfillment,
On its way to peace?
I don't know what I'll do without her;
There's no one left our age,
No one who remembers
The far-off things I do,
Things so much clearer
Than even yesterday.

THE NEAREST NEIGHBOR.

I shan't be bothered mealtimes
Anymore.
I never dreamt I'd feel so sorry.
I never could have done it —
Stayed in that great house alone,
With the dead I thought I saw.

THE VILLAGE DRUNK.

Well, the old lady's gone;
I outlived her. She said
I wouldn't, drinking so —
And said I'd go to Hell.
I hope I do — with a bottle.
Fourteen years she lived alone.
God! How did she do it!

ANOTHER OLD NEIGHBOR.

Let all be forgiven.
She was merciless in truth —
What she thought was truth.
It helped her stand what she had to.
O my soul! how did she?
How did she stand what she had to!

THE RELATIVE MOST LIKE HER.

There was no love between us;
We cherished hate and pride.
But the greatness of the family
Lies there in death with her.
It is well we cannot see
All our hands have wrought.

DISENCHANTMENT

BY EVELYN VERMILLION GLIED

A small child
puzzled at a sun-shaft
on the floor
grasps a warm, golden
nothingness
and cries . . .

THE DRY LEAVES

AN AUTUMNAL ELEGY

By GUSTAVO ADOLFO BECQUER

Translated by George H. Daugherty, Jr.

The sun had set. The ragged clouds streaming overhead began to pile above the distant horizon. The cold wind of a late autumn afternoon raised the dry leaves in a spiral at my feet.

I was seated at the side of that road where many pass, but none return.

I know not of what I was thinking, if in fact I thought of any thing. My soul was trembling at the point of launching itself into space as a bird trembles and lightly beats its wings ere it takes flight.

There are moments in which, after prolonged introspection, the spirit draws apart from all that surrounds it, and turning within itself analyzes and understands all the mysterious phenomena of the inner life of man.

There are other moments when it escapes from the flesh, loses its personality, and mingles with the elements of Nature, translates her esoteric language, and becomes one with her elusive being.

Alone, in the midst of a wide and desolate plain, I found myself entered into this mysterious mood. I heard voices beside me.

There were two leaves who spoke. These were their strange words:

"Whence come you, sister ? "

"I have come with the whirlwind in a cloud of dust and dry leaves, my sisters, swept all along this vast plain. And thou ? "

"I have long swirled in the current of the river, until the hurricane tore me from the mud and reeds of the bank."

"And whither goest thou ? "

"I know not. Perhaps the wind knows who drives me onward."

"Alas ! Who would have said we were to end thus, yellow and dry, blown along over the face of the earth, we who were once dressed in green and bathed in light and air ? "

"Rememberest thou the beautiful day when we came forth? Rememberest thou the gentle dawn when the bud which served as a cradle swelled and burst, unfolding us like a fan of emeralds to the soft caress of the sun?"

"Ah, how sweet it was to feel ourselves at that great height swayed by the breeze, drinking in the light and air at every pore!"

"Ah, how beautiful it was to see the flowing river which lapped the twisted roots of the hoary trunk which gave us life; to watch those sparkling, transparent waters which reflected the deep blue of the sky as in a glass, so that we seemed to live poised between two sapphire abysses."

"What a delight it was to stretch beyond the leafy fronds in order to see ourselves reflected in the trembling current!"

"How we sang together, imitating the whisper of the breeze and the rhythm of the waves!"

"The gleaming insects circled about us, unfolding their gauzy wings."

"The white butterflies and blue dragonflies which dart through the air in strange spirals paused an instant on our serrated edges to confide the secret of that mysterious love which lasts but a second yet consumes their lives."

"Each of us was a single note in the concert of the forest."

"Each one of us was a single tone in the harmony of its color."

"Rememberest thou that on moonlit nights when silvery light glided over the mountain tops, we chattered among the diaphonous shadows?"

"And we whispered in soft sighs the stories of the sylphs who delighted to swing themselves on the threads of gold which the spiders spun between the trees."

"Until we silenced our whispering to listen in ecstasy to the sweet plaints of the nightingale who had alighted upon our tree."

"And so soft and sad were his lamentings that, though delight thrilled us, the dawn found us weeping."

"Ah, how sweet were those tears which the dews of night lent to us, and how they gleamed with all the colors of the rainbow in the first light of dawn!"

"Then came a joyous flock of goldfinches, aquiver with life, filling the forest with their confused chatter and the merry trilling of their songs."

"One loving pair hung their nest of straws and feathers just beneath us."

"We sheltered the tiny nestlings against the beating drops of summer storms."

"We protected them as a canopy against the fierce rays of the sun."

"Our life passed like a golden dream from which we never expected to awake."

"One beautiful evening when everything about us seemed to smile, and when the sun blazed in the west, reddening all the clouds, and when the lightly moistened earth exhaled the breath of life and perfumes of flowers, two lovers paused on the bank at the foot of our tree."

"Never shall I forget them ! She was young, little more than a child, pale and beautiful. He asked her tenderly, 'Why weepest thou ? ' 'Pardon this selfishness,' she answered, dashing away a tear. 'I weep for myself. I weep for the life that flees from me. When the sky is crowned with rays of light, and the earth is dressed in flowers and verdure, and the wind carries perfumes and songs of birds and distant harmonies, and when one lives and knows oneself to be loved, ah ! life is so sweet ! '

" 'And why should you not live ? ' he insisted, frightened, and clasping her hands.

" 'Because it is impossible. When these leaves which murmur so sweetly above our heads shall become dry, and fall, I also shall die, and some day the wind will carry away their dust and mine . . . who knows whither?' Thou heardest her, I heard her, and we shivered and were still. We must become dry! We must die and be whirled away by the wind. We remained silent and terrified until night came. Ah, that dreadful night!"

"For the first time the enamored nightingale who had enchanted us with his melodious complaints failed at his tryst."

"Soon the birds flew away, and with them their little ones now dressed in feathers. The deserted nest remained swinging slowly and sadly like the empty cradle of a dead

child. The white butterflies and the blue dragonflies fled, leaving in their places lowly insects which gnawed our fibers and deposited within our bosoms their loathsome larvae."

"Ah, and how we shivered and shrank in the night at the icy touch of the frosts."

"We lost our color and our freshness."

"We lost our forms and our velvet smoothness. The sound of the breeze touching us, which before was like the whisper of kisses or the murmur of lovers' words, became a harsh rustle, dry, disagreeable, and sad."

"At last we, too, were torn away and forced to fly."

"Trampled under the foot of the indifferent passer-by, driven onward unceasingly, hither and thither, amid dust or slime, I have thought myself lucky whenever I could pause for one instant in the deep rut of the highway."

"And I have whirled continually, borne along by the muddy current ; and on my long voyage, I saw one of those two lovers whose words foretold death to us. He was alone, sad, and dressed in mourning, as he watched with distraught gaze the flowing waters and the withered leaves which floated by upon them."

"She, too, has taken farewell of life, and perhaps sleeps in the new-made grave upon which I paused for a moment."

"Alas! She sleeps and rests at last; but we — when shall this our long, long journey end ? "

"Never ! . . . Already the wind, which allowed us to rest here for a moment begins again to blow ; now I feel myself trembling to rise and go with him. Farewell, sister ! "

"Farewell ! . . . "

The wind which had been quiet began to whistle once more, and the leaves flew upward in a confused whirl, vanishing in the distance amid the shadows of night.

ARTISTS

Seasons
Are artists : spring . . .
Water colors; summer . . .
Pastelles; fall in oils; and winter,
Charcoal.

— *Dorothy Marie Davis*

CHILDHOOD

By Enid Morgan

I shall never go back to that drowsy town
Low in the hills with its cool-cropped lawn
Where long in the twilight the old bells toll,
Tolling again in the lovely dawn,
And moonlight falls on the white rose trees;
I shall only remember these:

Sundays in church and the murmured prayer
Rising slow on the summer air,
"Our Father who art in Heaven,
Hallowed be thy name" —
And a ragged, fragile butterfly beating at the pane.
Then God was Love and Jesus wept,
And four saints guarded while I slept;
Oh, the drifting years, the years so swift to pass
From clover blowing in the burning meadow grass.

Down in the glen where the yellow violets grow,
Barefoot in the brook, chill with melting snow,
Chirping of the sparrows in the crab apple tree,
"Run and hide, I'll find you, one, two, three.
Hiding in the burning bush, naked in the flame,
Nor have I ever found you, though long I breathed your name."

The sighing of a passing breeze through the stunted lilac trees,
The rustling beech that whispered, whispered me to sleep,
The apple tree that tossed its blossoms in a heap.
For flowers must die for fruit, and fruit being ripe must fall,
And rotten, lie in the nourishing earth, to make the tree grow tall.

The broken blue cup of the robin's egg,
The awkward fledgling, slow to learn,
Pushed from the nest and made to learn —

On and on, there is no return.
On and on, there is no return,
And the years are swift, oh, swift to pass.
Somewhere still the ghost of a child
Weaves clover chains in the meadow grass.

TWO POEMS

By Phoebe Smith

THE RUG WEAVER

Topaz and coral of an oriental dawn,
A wayside flower's exotic red;
Blue of an old sea's tropic light,
Choosing, rejecting, I blended thread by thread.

Charm of soft stars above a sleepy junk,
Moonlight on lotus blossoms — honey sweet —
Years were too short for fashioning, in love,
This dream I spread — a rug beneath your feet.

SONG TO PAN

Pan, Pan, make me a lute,
Fashioned of reeds and grass;
Teach me the music you play to the stars
And to high, white clouds as they pass.

Pan, Pan, bind me a wreath
Woven of fern and flowers,
Teach me to dance on this shell-fringed beach
All through the sun-bright hours.

Pan, Pan, sing me the songs
You sang in those first, dim years;
Teach me to drink of this heady joy
That leaves no savor of tears.

FIVE POEMS

By RALPH FRIEDRICH

COUNTRY BURIAL

It was a day in March, and much too mild
At equinox. The wind went swiftly over
Where willows like green fountains held their spray
In static loveliness, and jonquils in the grass
Were like a text of resurrection. Light
Lay warm upon us from the westering sun.

It was an ancient lady that had come
To lie that day at last in the embrace
Of the unquestioning earth, perhaps too long
Delayed in her return.
We saw the gleam
Of sun on granite, and the tunnelled ground
Where moles were diligent, the glow of grass
Bright with the spring, and quiet people standing
Aware of more than death: the young that looked
With alien eyes, the old that had no word
Upon their lips, but in their hearts farewell.

Where is a word for such a wordless grief
That is not grief for her who cozened death
Two decades, but for all the perished years
And all their habitants at last gone down
To be forgotten? Where is such a word ?

OF OUR PLANET, IN BITTERNESS

And if the end is shadow, or if fire,
It is a matter of no consequence
How space and time eventually conspire
Against one shining mote in the immense
Pageant of doom. Conceived of what desire,
Repulsed of what disgust, in bleak pretense
Of valor, will she near the flaming Lyre ?
What mouth will cry a word in her defense ?

What tongue will clamor grief ? What eye be cast
In pity earthward from another star
When to the crucible the sun at last
Will bear his shining progeny ? What far
And casual watcher will behold the flare
Of a lost sun, ensued by darkness there ?

IN THIS GRAY SEASON

As trees accept the Winter, take your grief.
In this gray season, be content to stand
Bereft of joy, to look upon the land
That is your sustenance. The vanished leaf
Has not betrayed the tree, however brief
Its time upon the bough. The marvelous hand
Of Spring will clothe the tree again, command
Green tides to engulf the Winter's stony reef.

If solace be but this: the fall of light
Through rifted clouds upon a world of snow,
It is enough to feel this warmth, to know
This passing radiance before the night
Bears warmth away and circumscribes the sight.
The light endures. The heart will have it so.

EVENTUALLY, EARTH

Eventually, Earth, you will go down
The curve of heaven, traversing perchance
The way to Vega. All your arrogance
Will not prevent it. Space will see you drown
In gulfs of fire. Perhaps a god will frown
At your destruction, and withdraw his glance
To more diverting fields of night where dance
The nebulae, to publish his renown.

Or yet, a god may laugh. Enormous mirth
May rock the sky when all your bitterness
And all your wonder are consumed to less
Than smoke upon the wind. O luckless Earth,
The sun that bore you has no need to bless
The flaming hour when you were brought to birth.

WINTER MIDNIGHT

Now the deepening night lifts the great planet-track
Out of the south, northward to zenith
And ever northward where at last
The Gemini ascend against the midnight hour.
Taurus is host to the moon. Sirius blazes
Low in the east. This side of earth
Sleeps in a shining trance.

Here I remember
Things long forgotten, and behold
Things not yet come to pass, and time is nothing
In this exultant night.

POEMS

By Alfred J. Smith

THE WAY OF LIFE

He came, a faithless butterfly,
Who flitted here and there
To sate a vagrant will.

And she, a modest wayside flower,
Knew all, yet hid her pain;
Forgave, and loved him still.

THE HERMITAGE

Safe hid within my soul
  A secret chamber is,
Wherein my true self dwells;
  My true self and the goal
Of what I long to be;
  And only my lone self
May enter in and know
  Me as I really am.

POEMS

By SOPHIE HIMMELL

THERE WILL BE DREAMS

There will be plum and chaste pear blossoms,
There will be scent of balsam on the hills,
The valleys will be graced by crowds
Of saffron daffodils ;
And rain — there will be rain
To swell a thousand streams.
There will be dreams —
Yet I shall know an iced solidity,
A winter in my cup ;
Bleak silence will companion me
When I wake to call your name.
It was not right, not right, my dear,
To leave me as young April came.

LOVE IS NO MORE

When love between us
Died — as all love must, —
We would not be
As those who go pretending
That all is well:
On this we had agreed,
And pledged the bargain
With our love.

Now unbending to the frost,
Our teeth on edge,
We stand pretending,
While love though dead
Lies uninterred.
And as if changed to stone
I can not be the one to say —
Love is no more.

RANN OF THE BURNING

(*from the Irish*)

By J. PATRICK BYRNE

Never burn the king of woods —
Pliant woodbine: all your goods,
House and slaves and wife and son
Shall be scattered, slain, undone;
Keening shall be raised for you
Pierced by shining swordblade through.

Burn the wizard's graceful tree;
The berried rowan burned shall be.

Spare the limber, sacred shoot;
Spare the hazel, branch and root.

Birch laid low shall banish cold,
Bring that hearth the gift of gold.

Let the precious apple grow,
Bear unharmed its wealth of snow;
Let low-sweeping, spreading boughs
Shade at noon the drowsy cows.

Burn the spiteful briar that stays
Foot from path, that cuts and flays.

Let the surly blackthorn stay;
Though his branch bear scanty spray
All the flocks of birds that sing
Choose that perch to herald spring.

Holly, burn it green or dry;
Burn, nor fear the evil eye.

Do not root the willow up;
Willow where the brown bees sup.

Burn the alder — battle-witch —
First in fight in field or ditch.

Fiercest heat were won from oak
Were it not his acrid smoke
Smarts the eye and keeps awake,
Sets the tender's head to ache.

Be the tough-barked elder downed —
Stable to the faery mound;
Tree that harms both slave and bard,
Be it hewn, and cut, and charred.

Shape to dark red vats the yew —
Patriarch of woods — and brew
Amber honey to bright mead
Worthy of a warrior's need.

Tear the russet aspen down,
Cast on fire in camp or town;
Trembling branch makes steady fire
Late or early, nor shall tire.

Dark the ashtree's hue, but sharp
Ashwood spear ; and hum like harp
Ashen chariot wheels that race
Where the foe has turned his face.

Last, let whitethorn feed the flame
Lit to cook the toothsome game.

PRAYER

By Betty Fisher

If some day I succeed,
Take away my greed.
Make me love the joys of life —
Make me feel the sounds of strife ;
Help me know the need of friends,
And before my poor life ends
Give me a God !

MATRON OF EPHESUS

IN ONE ACT

By WILL J. CUNNINGHAM

(With humble apologies to Petronius who first set down this delightful tale.)

CHARACTERS

HELEN — *matron of Ephesus*
ARTEMIS — *her maid*
ORESTUS — *a soldier*
OTHERS —
Helen's parents
Male friends of the deceased (two)
Female friends of Helen (two)
Workmen (two)
Officials (two)
Musicians (two)
Male slaves (five — mute)
Other Friends and Mourners

EPHESUS — *A Grecian city in Asia Minor; rich and powerful in ancient times as the capital of Ionia. Setting is a burying ground.*

(*In the right rear, a grassy mound overlooking a narrow road. In the foreground, a mausoleum with portico and bronze doors. A vestibule leads to a second pair of doors, even more ornate than the first. These, in turn, shut off the death chamber within. At rise two workmen are busy on outer door — one works on a giant hinge ; the other on a monster lock. Presently, in the distance, the mournful notes of a dirge. Almost imperceptibly, the music swells.*)

FIRST WORKMAN (*looking up.*) They're early.

SECOND WORKMAN. 'Tis a poor time to be early.

FIRST WORKMAN. Aye.

SECOND WORKMAN. He was less than a twelfth-month wedded, they say.

FIRST WORKMAN. Indeed! (*Joking.*) Worn out so quick?

SECOND WORKMAN (*laughing ; then seriously.*) I hear it was the fever.

First Workman. Fever? Ha! Too much heat'll make a cinder out of the strongest bull. (Second Workman *laughs loudly.*)

First Workman. Anyway he'll rest here.

Second Workman (*nodding.*) Aye. She won't bother him now.

First Workman. A "daric" she weighs less than a hundredweight.

Second Workman (*with experience.*) 'Tis always the way. (*After a moment.*) They say she's beautiful.

First Workman. Is she? Then it won't be long till she has another.

Second Workman. Like as not. (First Workman *stops, wipes hands carefully, enters vault.* Second Workman *remains busy with lock. The music which has steadily increased in volume, as the funeral procession advances, is augmented now by the chant of the mourners. Presently,* First Workman *comes out of vault. Music and singing suddenly becomes clear.*)

First Workman (*impatiently*). Hurry.

Second Workman. They're only at the turn. (*Both men work together now — and in great haste. The music and chanting swell.*)

First Workman. It'll have to do. Quick! They're upon us.

Second Workman (*giving lock a final twist.*) That'll hold him. (*Workmen hurriedly gather up their tools, move off to one side. Almost at once the funeral enters, coming in from the right. The Officials and Musicians are first. Then the bier carried by slaves. Directly behind, with robes and trappings of the deceased, another slave. He is bigger and blacker than any of the others. Following him is* Helen, *the widow; very young, very beautiful, her hair loose after the Greek fashion. She is weeping and beating her breast.* Artemis, *coal black and sleek —* Helen's *maid — with sweet oil, incense, and a vigil light, walks a few paces behind her mistress. Relatives and friends complete the procession. When all are on, and gathered in a semi-circle about the bier, music and singing stop.*)

First Official (*authoritatively; to Workmen.*) Is everything ready?

WORKMEN (*almost together.*) Aye. Aye.

HELEN. (*Wailing.*) Woe! Woe! Woe is me! Woe is me!

FIRST MOURNER (FEMALE) (*to Second Mourner.*) Poor thing! (*Second Mourner (female) nods.*)

ARTEMIS (*going to Helen.*) Precious! Thy heart will break.

FIRST MOURNER (FEMALE) (*aside; to Second Mourner.*) 'Tis so foolish. There are other men.

SECOND MOURNER (FEMALE) (*nodding.*) Aye. And a widow so beautiful.

HELEN (*inconsolable.*) Oh! Oh! Oh! Woe is me! Woe is me! (HELEN *sways; faints. Commotion as mourners crowd around her. Artemis applies aromatics. Presently* HELEN *regains consciousness.*)

ARTEMIS (*sympathetically.*) Poor child! Better? (*As* HELEN *sits up.*) 'Twas but the faintness.

HELEN (*wearily; brushing her forehead.*) Would that it had never ceased. (ARTEMIS *helps her to her feet.*)

MOTHER (*to* HELEN; *anxiously.*) My dear child . . .

HELEN. Fear not, mother. (HELEN *crosses toward bier.*)

FATHER (*about to restrain her.*) Don't go there, daughter. (MOTHER *takes* FATHER'S *arm. He hesitates; shrugs.* OFFICIALS *are concerned.* HELEN *weeps at bier.*)

HELEN (*presently; low voice.*) My precious one! (*Touches remains.*) With thy curly locks. (*Lifts voice.*) Why did it have to be? Why? Why? When thou wert so good? (*Heartbroken and disconsolate,* HELEN *throws herself on frame.*)

HELEN (*wailing.*) Why? Why? Oh, why? (OFFICIALS *and friends drag* HELEN *away. As mother tries to comfort her,* FATHER *signals to* FIRST OFFICIAL, *who motions to* MUSICIANS. *They immediately take up their instruments, playing very softly at the beginning. Meanwhile* SECOND OFFICIAL, *crossing to frame, prepares deceased for interment.* HELEN, *inconsolable, wringing her hands and moaning, leans heavily on her parents as she watches the proceedings.*)

HELEN (*presently; wailing.*) Nevermore to hear thy foot upon the threshold . . . (*Music swells.*) Oh, once again

to feel thy warm embrace! To taste thy lips! And smoothe thy ruddy cheek! My light! My love! (*Music reaches full strength.*) Woe! Woe! Woe is me! (*Whimpering.*) Woe is me! (*At this point* OFFICIALS *and slaves form line — preparatory to interring the body. While the* MUSICIANS *play softly, the procession files slowly, ceremoniously, into the tomb. The* OFFICIALS *walk first, followed by slaves carrying the frame; and finally, alone, the* BIG SLAVE *with the trappings and robes of the deceased. As they proceed,* HELEN *screams, beats her breasts, pulls her hair more furiously than ever, struggling to follow them.*)

FRIEND (FEMALE) (*aside; to another.*) Never did I see the like. (*Several shake their heads.*)

FRIEND (MALE) (*to Second Friend.*) Her own health will be destroyed.

SECOND FRIEND (MALE) (*nodding*). And to what profit?

SECOND FRIEND (FEMALE) (*to him.*) More the fool. Husbands are cheap.

SECOND FRIEND (MALE) (*excited.*) Look! (HELEN, *distracted and beside herself, struggling to get away, bites her father's hand so that, in pain, he withdraws it momentarily. At the same time,* HELEN *pushes her mother roughly to one side. She leaps to the portico where she faces the Musicians, her eyes wild.*)

HELEN (*screaming.*) Stop! (MUSICIANS *obey at once. Immediately* OFFICIALS *and slaves hurry out of vault.*)

HELEN (*to* OFFICIALS *and* SLAVES; *imperiously.*) Go! (*to Musicians*) Go! (*to others*) Go! (*raising her voice.*) Go now! (*stamping her foot.*) All of you!

ARTEMIS (*throwing herself at Helen's feet.*) O Mistress!

HELEN (*putting her hand on* ARTEMIS' *head; softer.*) Except Artemis. (*Louder again.*) Leave me! (*shrilly*) All of you . . . Go! (MOURNERS *look at each other in astonishment.*)

HELEN (*furious.*) Dost thou hear?

FIRST OFFICIAL (*at loss; to Second Official.*) This is most irregular.

SECOND OFFICIAL (*to Helen; patiently.*) Thou canst not really think it wise to leave the sepulchre unsealed?

HELEN (*fiercely.*) Fear not. I shall guard him. (*muttering.*) With my life. (*Helen's mother crosses to her, and*

putting arm around Helen's waist, tries to coax her from her position.)

MOTHER (*tenderly.*) Come! Come, my child!

FATHER (*advancing.*) Aye. The afternoon grows long. 'Tis foolish. (*Helen, breaking away from mother, pulls dagger from folds of her tunic.*)

(*More or less all together.*)

MOURNERS. Look! O-o-h! A-a-h!

HELEN (*wildly.*) Insist and I shall die with him.

MOTHER (*frightened.*) Stop!

FATHER (*shocked.*) Nay!

ARTEMIS (*pleading.*) Mistress! Mistress!

HELEN (*to all; determined.*) Then here shall I remain.

FATHER (*after a pause; shrugging.*) Let her stay.

MOTHER (*anxiously.*) Thou art sure?

HELEN. Certain as the nightfall.

FATHER (*leading mother away.*) We can do no more. (*Parents start off — to the right — very slowly. Others follow.*)

FIRST WORKMAN (*aside; to Second Workman.*) Her brains are spilled.

SECOND WORKMAN. Aye. Mad by the gods!

MOURNER (MALE). Sh-h-h!

SECOND MOURNER (MALE). Quiet! (*First Official motions for Workmen to be silent. They shrug, pick up their tools, walk off — left. Helen and Artemis are alone. LIGHT BEGINS TO FADE. Helen throws herself on portico, and presently, in a low voice, chants a dirge. SOON IT IS QUITE DARK.*)

CURTAIN.

SCENE II.

The Same, Five Days Later.

HELEN *and* ARTEMIS, *with mantles pulled over their tunics, are asleep on the portico. The vigil light — close beside them — burns brightly at first; more feebly as dawn embraces the sky. Presently it is daylight. After a few moments a rumble is heard. This noise grows steadily in volume until, in time, we are aware that a great many people — perhaps a mob — is advancing along the road.* HELEN

and ARTEMIS *stir uneasily, but do not awaken. Presently the rumble gives way to a loud roar, as the mob expresses itself in a shout which echoes and reechoes through the burying ground. Instantly* HELEN *and* ARTEMIS *are sitting up, listening anxiously. Clearly now, men's voices may be distinguished — harsh, guttural, coarse voices that yell, and shout, and curse, and swear — all at the same time — all excited by a common stimulus.*

ARTEMIS (*after a moment; thrilled.*) A crucifixion. (*She hurries to a mound in back.*)

(*FOR A FEW MOMENTS THE TUMULT CONTINUES AT A HIGH PITCH*)

ARTEMIS (*presently; calling over her shoulder.*) Two of them. One young. The other with a gray beard. Barbarians. Both (*thrilled.*) What a crowd! It must be a holiday. (*When* HELEN *doesn't answer,* ARTEMIS *turns and finding her mistress busy with the vigil lamp, stealthily edges toward the road. She is nearly off, when* HELEN *looks up.* ARTEMIS *halts guiltily.*)

HELEN (*sharply.*) Whither goest thou?

ARTEMIS (*self-consciously.*) To see better, Mistress.

HELEN (*ominously.*) Or to run away? Which?

ARTEMIS (*frightened.*) To leave thee, Mistress? Nay. Never!

HELEN (*commanding.*) Come hither. (ARTEMIS *hesitates.*)

HELEN (*rising; furious.*) Slut of Carthage! Who is thy mistress? (*advancing.*) Thou black toad! Dost thou hear? Come hither! At once! (*From this point on, the clamor and excitement fade, as the men get farther and farther along the road.*)

(*THROUGHOUT REMAINDER OF SCENE, A LOW RUMBLE CONTINUES TO EBB AND SWELL AS THE MOB'S PASSIONS ARE ALTERNATELY DAMPENED OR INFLAMED.*)

ARTEMIS (*cringing.*) O beautiful one, thou art my mistress. (*Fawning.*) Never wouldst Artemis flee thee. Never, Mistress.

HELEN (*seizing her by the hair.*) L-i-a-r!

ARTEMIS (*groveling as* HELEN *displays dagger.*) Mercy! Mercy!

HELEN (*after a moment; throwing* ARTEMIS *roughly to one side.*) I should slit thy throat and have done with it.

ARTEMIS (*prone on ground; whimpering.*) ARTEMIS loves thee. ARTEMIS would die for thee, Mistress. Gladly!

HELEN (*scornful.*) B-a-h! (HELEN *comes slowly to the front, and sitting on the portico, begins to comb her hair.* ARTEMIS, *after a few moments, half-rises, looks furtively at* HELEN, *hesitates, presently returns to her position on the mound.*)

ARTEMIS (*after a time; excited; pointing.*) It's the old one. (*Turning.*) He fell. (*After pause.*) The soldiers are lifting him. (*More excited.*) He's down again. (*Pause.*) He can't get up. (*Pause; then rapidly.*) No, he won't get up. That's it. He won't get up for them. (*Pointing again.*) Look! They're flogging him. (*Drawing in her breath sharply.*) They'll kill him. (*Over her shoulder.*) Come, Mistress. Quick! Before it's too late! (*Terribly excited.*) There goes an officer. A-a-a-h! (*Then to* HELEN; *pointing up.*) His horse was like that. A beautiful horse. All white. (*Looking off again; somewhat disappointed, and puzzled.*) Now what? (*For a few moments* ARTEMIS *is quiet—completely absorbed in the distant scene. Then . . .*)

ARTEMIS (*with understanding.*) Oh! (*Over her shoulder.*) They're dragging him. Others have the cross. (HELEN *remains busy with her hair.* ARTEMIS *turns again to the crucifixion.*)

ARTEMIS (*presently.*) They're at the Hill now.

HELEN (*weary; to herself.*) Then it won't be long. (*Sighing.*) Praise Zeus!

ARTEMIS (*suddenly; excited; pointing off.*) See that soldier! (*The roar of the mob swells noticeably at this point and IS SUSTAINED.*)

ARTEMIS (*turning; with admiration.*) He put the cross up almost alone.

HELEN (*bored.*) What matter?

ARTEMIS (*thrilled; half to herself.*) Oh, for a man like that!

HELEN (*overhearing; derisively.*) A fig for him. (*Once more the mob roars.*)

ARTEMIS (*turning; excited.*) Now they're both up. (*With satisfaction; pointing.*) Look! A crow!

HELEN (*abstracted.*) *An evil bird. Come to feast. . . .*

ARTEMIS (*after a moment; disappointed*). The soldiers are driving them off. Down the other road. (*Plaintively.*) Why don't they let them stay? (*All noise fades rapidly; soon it is quiet.*)

HELEN (*presently.*) Come down, Artemis. (ARTEMIS *reluctantly leaves the mound.*)

ARTEMIS (*sighing*). There's nothing like a crucifixion.

HELEN. They deserved their fate. (*Bitterly.*) Our Master didn't.

ARTEMIS (*impatiently.*) Why dost thou continue to grieve so? Is not our Master resting in a noble vault? Is he not safe from the wind and the rain? Is he not guarded even in Death by his greatest treasure in Life? (*Shaking her head.*) I count him a fortunate man indeed.

HELEN (*shortly.*) Thou art a fool. Worse than the Sophists.

ARTEMIS (*shrugging.*) Maybe. But if I had a spouse and lost him, I'd get me another. Stronger; more handsome.

HELEN (*with quick resentment.*) Was he not fair as a god?

ARTEMIS (*meekly.*) Yea, Mistress. (*Muttering out of side of mouth.*) Fair as a god no less? And his crown smooth as a pomegranate. (HELEN, *preoccupied, rocks forward and back, moaning softly.*)

ARTEMIS (*disgusted! half to herself*). Sitting in a grave. What nonsense!

HELEN. Silence! (*Each lost with her thoughts. Then . . .*)

HELEN (*presently; with deep sigh.*) Surely this life cannot last so long? (HELEN *rises, walks slowly into vestibule of mausoleum.* ARTEMIS, *at outer door, listens for a moment — anxiously. Then nervously, hurriedly, she begins to collect her personal belongings. As soon as she has them together, she makes her way, furtively, toward the road. She is almost off, when* HELEN *appears on the portico.*)

HELEN (*sharply.*) ARTEMIS! (ARTEMIS, *panic stricken, stops, half-turns, in her confusion, tries to hide her clothing.*)

HELEN (*after a pause; ominously.*) So-o-o! (*Like a trapped bird,* ARTEMIS *waits while her mistress comes toward her — slowly. Just before* HELEN *reaches her,* ARTEMIS *falls*

on her knees, her arms extended in supplication. HELEN *grabs her.*)

ARTEMIS (*pleading.*) Mercy! Mercy, Mistress!

HELEN. Mercy, indeed! (*Hesitating; then severely.*) What is the penalty for slaves who run away? (ARTEMIS *whimpers.*)

HELEN (*threatening her.*) Answer!

ARTEMIS. Death!

HELEN. Y-e-a. Stand! (*Terrified,* ARTEMIS, *gets up.*)

HELEN (*grimly.*) Thou shalt go to the market-place.

ARTEMIS (*dropping to her knees again.*) Mercy! Mercy! (*She throws her arms around* HELEN'S *ankles; puts her head at* HELEN'S *feet.*

ARTEMIS. Mercy, Mistress! (*Whimpering.*) Please.

HELEN (*after a long moment; softer.*) Get up. (*Timidly,* ARTEMIS *lifts her head, and when* HELEN *nods, seizes her mistress' hand, kissing it again and again.*)

HELEN (*presently.*) Enough. I am weary. (*While* HELEN *crosses slowly toward the vault,* ARTEMIS *collects her scattered belongings.*)

CURTAIN

SCENE III.

The same. Dusk. That afternoon.

(*In the dim light* HELEN *and* ARTEMIS *are sitting on the portico. Presently* ARTEMIS *rises, enters vestibule. She returns almost at once with a vigil light. After trimming the wick and adding fresh oil, she polishes it vigorously. She is about to return the lamp, when a deep voice hails them from the distance.*)

ARTEMIS (*stopping; interested.*) A man?

HELEN (*annoyed.*) Some lout unsteady in wine and lost from the road. (*The stranger may be heard as he advances.* *MEANWHILE IT GROWS DARKER.*)

ARTEMIS (*after a minute; pointing off.*) Over there.

HELEN (*to* ARTEMIS.) Silence! (*Half to herself.*) Must he intrude where the widow grieves?

VOICE (*presently; much nearer.*) Ho-o, light! (*Answering,* ARTEMIS *lifts lamp high over her head.*)

ARTEMIS (*at same time.*) Ho-o!

HELEN (*angry; attempting to strike slave.*) Put it

down! (*Artemis complies immediately. Is careful to keep out of mistress' reach.*)

Helen (*threatening her.*) And hold thy tongue! (*The stranger, still unseen, is whistling now. QUITE DARK BY THIS TIME.*)

Helen (*after a moment.*) Curse the swine! Has he no respect? (*Whistling is much louder. Another minute, and the stranger will be over the hill.*)

Helen (*suddenly; to* Artemis.) Bid him be off! (*As* Artemis *hesitates,* Helen, *in a rage, grabs her, throws her against one of the columns of the portico.* Artemis *stumbles, falls — LAMP KNOCKED TO ONE SIDE: BUT DOES NOT GO OUT. — Screaming,* Artemis *rolls out of* Helen's *reach.*) (*Suddenly, from the left, with much clatter enter, running,* Orestus — *a soldier. He is young, handsome; a giant of a man. In his right hand is a heavy sword, unsheathed.*)

Orestus (*noisily.*) Ho-o-o! (*In two great leaps he clears the portico. In a continuous motion, seizes* Helen, *spins her around, and sends her flying to land in a heap on top of* Artemis.)

Orestus (*belligerently.*) I'll give thee fight. (*Standing over the women, and holding* Helen *down with his foot,* Orestus *brings up his sword.*)

Orestus (*in a loud voice.*) Quarter? Quick! Before I rip thy lousy guts.

Helen (*furious.*) Thou empty-headed fool!

Orestus (*falling back; amazed.*) Women!

Helen (*sneering.*) Yea, women.

Orestus (*muddled; to himself.*) A queer business. (*To* Helen.) I pray thee, forgive a soldier. (Helen, *sitting up, laughs scornfully.*)

Helen. A soldier. Ha-a!

Orestus (*shortly.*) How should I know?

Helen (*getting up.*) A drunken barracks ox! Of course! How shouldst thou know? (*Derisively.*) Anything?

Orestus (*defensively.*) I heard the scream . . .

Helen (*interrupting him.*) Be still! The clatter of thy tongue is a nuisance. (Artemis, *picking herself up, retrieves the vigil lamp, places it on the level.* Orestus

sheathes his sword. HELEN *studying him, rearranges her tunic.*)

ORESTUS (*solicitously; to* HELEN.) Art thou hurt? (HELEN *looks at him with slow contempt; then crosses to* ARTEMIS *who falls back.*)

ARTEMIS. Mercy, Mistress!

ORESTUS. 'Twas not the slave's fault.

HELEN (*halting and facing him.*) My eyes are sore with the sight of thee, soldier; my ears distressed with the sound of thy voice. Be off! We would be alone. A dog were fitter company.

ORESTUS (*nettled.*) Alone. Ha! To consort with some lover fled from a faithful wife. Fie! Fie! In a grave, too? Is nothing sacred?

HELEN (*furious.*) Thou evil pig! Dost thou not know that soldiers fight and women talk?

ORESTUS (*hotly.*) With Cyrus did I march against Babylon, and I stood near him in the charge that cost his life. (*Exposing his chest.*) This scar that marks me . . . How think you I came by it? Whoring in the market-place? (*Holding out his left arm.*) And this cut? See for yourself! (*After pause; drawing himself to full height.*) Three days the battle raged. (*He laughs shortly; boasting.*) Then with Xenephon, through the perilous mountains down to the sea, we made our way. Yea. And paraded victoriously through the shouting streets.

HELEN (*sneering.*) Thy bragging is as the braying of the ass. (ORESTUS *advances threateningly, glares at her. With fire in her own eyes,* HELEN *returns his gaze. Then she shrugs, steps back — wearily.*)

HELEN (*dully.*) Wilt thou not go, soldier? The hour is late. Go, I pray thee.

ORESTUS (*under his breath.*) Zeus, what a cross-grained bitch! (*Aloud.*) When I see fit. (HELEN *with weary steps crosses to the portico; sits down.* ORESTUS *walks about examining everything carefully.*)

ORESTUS (*presently; half to himself.*) A most unseemly place. (*Then to* HELEN.) Dost thou not fear the ghosts who prowl among these trees? (HELEN *shakes her head.*)

ORESTUS (*puzzled.*) Pray, what melancholy so disturbs thy liver?

HELEN (*after moment.*) Woe! Woe is me! Bereft of my spouse. Wretched am I.

ORESTUS (*with some understanding.*) Oh!

HELEN (*dully.*) But here shall I remain till our shadows are united.

ORESTUS (*with great interest.*) Thou art not perchance she of whom they speak in the market-place?

HELEN (*looking up quickly.*) What do they say, soldier?

ORESTUS. Thy fame spreads like fire throughout the city.

HELEN (*pleased.*) Dost thou hear, ARTEMIS? (*Under her breath.*) 'Tis good.

ORESTUS (*puzzled.*) And thou wouldst really depart this earth to keep him company?

HELEN (*sighing deeply.*) Verily.

ORESTUS (*amazed.*) A woman among women.

HELEN (*after pause.*) What of thee, soldier?

ORESTUS (*pointing off.*) I guard yon crosses lest the bodies be stolen for decent burial.

HELEN (*half aloud.*) The rabble of the morning. (*to* ORESTUS.) A long commission?

ORESTUS (*shrugging.*) Till the wind and the rain have their way.

HELEN (*significantly.*) Thou art a good soldier?

ORESTUS (*annoyed.*) In this short time what could happen? (*HELEN shrugs indifferently.*)

ORESTUS (*defensively.*) They're securely fastened. Hand and foot; and dead as stones.

HELEN (*with something of a sneer.*) In the Forum, soldier, they would crown thee with laurel.

ORESTUS. To "pot" with the Forum.

HELEN (*raising eyebrows.*) So-o! Thou wouldst have us believe thy valor greatly outmatches their argumentation.

ORESTUS (*his lip curled.*) What knowest thou of valor?

HELEN (*quickly.*) Little, beyond that it is cheap where dead men hang.

ORESTUS (*furious.*) Ba-a-h! 'Twill be a good thing when the shroud is around thee, too. (*In a rage,* ORESTUS *storms off — to the left.*)

HELEN. Great Zeus! May he split himself. (*To* ARTEMIS.) Didst thou hear?

ARTEMIS. A pig!

HELEN. A barbarian! Would that he were in boiling oil.

ARTEMIS (*dryly.*) Over his head. (*By degrees* HELEN'S *resentment cools, and she becomes preoccupied, occasionally casting a glance in* ARTEMIS' *direction. Presently she removes one of her rings, and after inspecting it, crosses to* ARTEMIS.)

HELEN (*giving ring to slave.*) Here.

ARTEMIS (*gratefully.*) O Mistress!

HELEN. Now leave me. No longer shall my woe be thy grief. My madness thy destruction. Go . . . (*Lower.*) Whilst there is yet time.

ARTEMIS (*putting ring on finger; delighted with it.*) Never, Mistress. Artemis loves thee.

HELEN (*amazed.*) Didst thou not this morning seek to flee the tomb?

ARTEMIS. That was long ago, Mistress.

HELEN (*after a moment; questioningly.*) Perchance the soldier makes the grave more desirable?

ARTEMIS. The soldier . . . (*Snapping fingers.*) Puf-f-f for a soldier! (HELEN *looks at her searchingly.*)

HELEN (*still suspicious.*) Then is it the band of gold that inspires this great loyalty?

ARTEMIS. What's a bit of gold?

HELEN (*coldly; her hand out.*) Give it back. (ARTEMIS *hesitates.*)

HELEN (*sharply.*) Dost thou hear? (ARTEMIS, *sobbing, returns ring.* HELEN *observes the slave shrewdly.*)

HELEN (*presently; handing ring back.*) Keep it, if it makes thee happy. (ARTEMIS *drys eyes; admires ring; primps.* HELEN, *preoccupied, walks up and down on the portico.*)

HELEN (*presently.*) My poor darling! Cold and dead. (*To* ARTEMIS.) Dost thou think he knows how much we love him, ARTEMIS?

ARTEMIS (*glibly.*) Of course, Mistress.

HELEN. Didst thou heed the soldier's words of what they say in the city?

ARTEMIS. Yea, Mistress.

HELEN (*musing; with relish.*) Thy fame spreads like fire throughout the city. (*Aloud.*) 'Tis good, Artemis.

ARTEMIS. A most faithful wife.

HELEN. Even in death, Artemis?

ARTEMIS. Even in the grave, Mistress.

HELEN (*after a moment; mourning again.*) He was truly the greatest man in all Lydia. Like a god.

ARTEMIS (*muttering.*) All Lydia, no less. (*Normal voice; emphatically.*) But now he is dead.

HELEN (*still abstracted.*) Yea. So young. Ah, woe! Woe is me! (*Pause; then lower.*) But soon I shall join him. (*At this point, in the distance, a man's voice singing a martial air.* ORESTUS *advances steadily.*)

ARTEMIS (*thrilled.*) A voice like thunder on the mountain-top.

HELEN (*annoyed.*) Rather like a fish monger's in the market-place. (*After a moment,* ORESTUS, *carrying bread and wine, enters from left. He stops singing as soon as he is on.*)

ARTEMIS (*friendly*). Thou hast brought thy supper?

HELEN (*to her.*) Silence (*Sneering; to* ORESTUS.) The brave soldier was fearful, alone with his dead men?

ORESTUS (*shortly.*) The soldier fears no man, living or dead. (HELEN *shrugs — unimpressed.* ORESTUS *drinks some of his wine. Then . . .*)

ORESTUS (*offering jug to* HELEN.) Sip? (HELEN *shakes her head.*)

ORESTUS (*to* ARTEMIS.) Slave wilt thou drink? (ARTEMIS *hesitates; then shakes her head.*)

ORESTUS (*taking huge bite of bread; to* ARTEMIS.) Is thy master also clothed in a shroud? (*Artemis, her eyes greedy, watching the soldier eat, shakes her head — slowly.*)

ORETUS (*boisterously.*) Then, drink. 'Twill warm the blood in thy veins. (*Again* ARTEMIS *shakes her head — but the covetous look in her eyes is intensified.*)

ORESTUS (*dryly.*) 'Tis foolish to starve. (*Putting down wine; wiping mouth with back of hand.*) More to my liking to die by the sword.

HELEN. Would that I could satisfy thee.

ORESTUS (*ignoring* HELEN *and turning to* ARTEMIS.) What sayst thou, slave? (*Artemis shakes her head quickly, but catching* HELEN'S *eye upon her, discreetly holds her peace.*)

ORESTUS (*pleased; offering wine.*) Then drink. (*With gusto.*) Thou art not hard upon a soldier's eye. (ARTEMIS, *pleased, glances fearfully at her mistress who expresses her indifference with a weary gesture.* ARTEMIS *at once takes the wine; drinks deeply.*)

ORESTUS. Bread? (ARTEMIS, *smiling, accepts; eats with relish, and drinks more wine.*)

ARTEMIS (*presently.*) 'Tis wonderful, Mistress, to taste the food. (HELEN *shrugs.*)

ORESTUS (*irritably.*) Was he a god, this man of thine? (HELEN *looks at soldier with slow contempt; does not answer.*)

ORESTUS (*matter of fact.*) Many men have I seen. In many lands . . . When they're dead . . . (ORESTUS *shrugs expressively.*)

ARTEMIS (*feeling the wine; cynically.*) Thou should have known him, soldier.

ORESTUS (*spitting.*) B-a-h!

ARTEMIS (*giggling; holding up finger.*) He had an arm like that. (*Lightly.*) No wonder he wore out. (HELEN, *furious, goes for slave who retreats hastily. As* HELEN *chases her,* ORESTUS *roars his enjoyment. Presently* ARTEMIS, *exhausted, hides behind soldier.*)

HELEN (*in front of them; to* ARTEMIS.) Pig! Filthy pig! I'll have the skin from thy back!

ARTEMIS (*frightened.*) Mercy, Mistress! (*Jumping suddenly to the left,* HELEN *tries to get by* ORESTUS. *He holds her off easily.*)

HELEN (*to him; wildly.*) Unhand me! (ORESTUS, *laughing, pushes* HELEN *away...She almost falls; is beside herself with rage.* ORESTUS *roars his laughter presently . . .*)

ORESTUS (*sobering; with an approving air.*) Give me a bitch with fire any day. (*Reaching one hand behind him, he grabs* ARTEMIS, *throws her at* HELEN's *feet.*)

ARTEMIS (*groveling.*) Mercy, Mistress! Mercy!

HELEN (*kicking her.*) Yea! Mercy, indeed! (ARTEMIS *rolls out of reach, springs to her feet runs to mound in back where she crouches.* HELEN *starts after her; suddenly stops; reels; catches her side; sits down exhausted.*)

ORESTUS (*hurrying to* HELEN; *offering wine.*) Take a sip. It will give thee strength. (HELEN *shakes her head.*)

ORESTUS (*provoked.*) A babe would have more sense. (HELEN *looks at him scornfully.*)

ORESTUS (*threatening her.*) I have a mind to pour it down thy throat. (*ARETMIS, coming front, places herself between them.*)

ARTEMIS (*pleading.*) Let me, soldier. (ORESTUS *hesitates; then gives wine to* ARTEMIS.)

ORESTUS (*to the slave.*) Make her drink. (ARTEMIS *offers wine to* HELEN, *but she refuses it.*)

ORESTUS (*beside himself; to* ARTEMIS.) Give it here, slave. (ARTEMIS, *holding jug away from him, shakes her head. Then quickly . . .*)

ARTEMIS (*as she puts wine to* HELEN'S *lips.*) A drop to moist thy pretty lips. Come, precious. A sip?

ORESTUS (*threateningly.*) Or I'll pour it down thy gullet.

ARTEMIS (*coaxingly.*) 'Tis foolish to die, Mistress, when thou art young and so beautiful.

ORESTUS (*heartily.*) The slave speaks the truth.

ARTEMIS. In all the city there is not one so fair.

ORESTUS (*delighted; to* ARTEMIS.) Thou art wiser than a hundred solons.

ARTEMIS. Come, Mistress, a sip? A tiny sip. (*As* ARTEMIS *holds up the wine,* HELEN *lashes out with her hand, almost knocks the jug to the ground. With an oath,* ORESTUS *grabs* HELEN, *pinions her arms. With his free hand, he takes the jug from* ARTEMIS.)

ORESTUS (*holding wine to* HELEN'S *lips.*) Wilt thou drink? (*For a moment longer* HELEN *resists; then with a sigh, she relaxes and nods meekly.*)

ORESTUS (*with satisfaction.*) Good! (HELEN *accepts wine but does not drink.*)

HELEN (*a plaintive voice.*) What will they say of me in the city, soldier?

ARTEMIS (*interrupting.*) How will they know, Mistress?

ORESTUS (*lightly.*) Ps-shaw for what they say! (HELEN *looks off into space. Presently her mind is made up and she puts the jug to her lips, sipping the wine. The next minute is drinking greedily. When she puts the jug down, she smiles gratefully at* ORESTUS.)

ORESTUS (*pleased.*) Was it not good?

HELEN (*nodding slowly.*) Divine.

ORESTUS. Bread? (HELEN *accepts eagerly.*)

HELEN (*after a moment; munching.*) 'Tis rather like cake.

ORESTUS (*delighted.*) Thou art gracious of my humble fare.

HELEN. Soldier, thy generosity is a jewel which shines no less brightly because of the quality of thy gifts. (*Quicker.*) What is thy name?

ORESTUS. Orestus.

HELEN (*half to herself.*) A becoming name for a man of arms.

ORESTUS. And thine?

HELEN. Helen.

ORESTUS (*offering both bread and wine; tenderly.*) More, Helen? (HELEN, *smiling, shakes head.*)

ORESTUS. But thou hast eaten but a bite.

HELEN (*dryly.*) For a soldier perhaps.

ARTEMIS. Already thou art better, Mistress.

HELEN (*to her.*) Art thou glad, Artemis?

ARTEMIS (*earnestly.*) Yea, Mistress. Indeed.

ORESTUS (*quickly to* HELEN.) Art thou not pleased thyself to be rid of these morbid longings?

HELEN (*thoughtfully.*) He was a noble man, soldier. Admired by all.

ORESTUS (*impatiently.*) Zeus! Thou art worse than a boil on the buttocks. Let the dead rest.

ARTEMIS (*heartily.*) Aye. Let him be. What difference now?

ORESTUS. Yea. What difference? He's dead.

ARTEMIS. In the vault.

ORESTUS (*with utter disgust.*) Such folly.

HELEN (*after a pause; slowly.*) The logic of thy words is strong. (*deliberately.*) The dead SHALL REST.

ARTEMIS. Praise Zeus!

ORESTUS (*delighted.*) At last this madness flees thee. (*Standing.*) To the goddess, Diana, a silver urn! The best the smiths can hammer!

HELEN (*hesitating.*) Art thou so pleased, soldier?

ORESTUS (*heartily.*) Indeed! (*Then tenderly.*) 'Twere a great pity for one so young, so beautiful, to quit this world

so soon. (*More quickly.*) Come! A toast! (*Offering* HELEN *wine.*) Drink! (*She hesitates; then drinks.*)

ORESTUS (*toasting* HELEN.) To thou, fairest one! (ORESTUS *drinks deeply.* HELEN *blushes.*)

ORESTUS (*with admiration.*) The bloom of thy cheeks is wondrous to behold.

HELEN (*further embarrassed.*) Orestus!

ORESTUS (*moving closer; tenderly.*) Truly, thou art a most beautiful creature, Helen.

HELEN (*with an obvious effort.*) Come, come, Orestus. Thou art a soldier with a duty to perform. Over long now hast thou been absent from thy post.

ORESTUS (*heartily.*) On a more important duty, I swear. (HELEN *shakes head doubtfully.*)

ORESTUS (*tenderly.*) Fear not, Helen. (*Lightly.*) A dead man's foot makes little noise.

ORESTUS (*suddenly turning to* ARTEMIS.) Slave, thinkest thou couldst watch the crucified ones?

ARTEMIS (*hesitates; then looks at* HELEN *who nods.*) Aye, soldier. (HELEN *smiles approvingly.*)

ARTEMIS (*eagerly.*) All the night through, soldier. Gladly.

ORESTUS (*tossing her coin.*) I'll relieve thee soon.

ARTEMIS (*delighted with its size.*) Oh-h-h-! (ORESTUS *laughs; tosses second coin.* ARTEMIS *catching it, kisses both coins, clutching them in her palm.*)

ORESTUS (*snapping his fingers.*) Go! (*Exit* ARTEMIS *— left.* ORESTUS, *motioning for* HELEN *to wait, crosses to mound, watches for few moments. Presently . . .)*

ORESTUS (*turning.*) She's gone. (ORESTUS *comes front.*)

ORESTUS (*lightly.*) If the Captain only knew . . . (*He laughs heartily.*)

HELEN (*after a moment; thoughtfully.*) 'Twas wrong to send the slave, Orestus.

ORESTUS. And right to leave a beautiful woman alone?

HELEN. The first duty of a soldier . . .

ORESTUS (*interrupting; arms outstretched; tenderly.*) Kiss me, darling!

HELEN (*retreating; low voice.*) That cannot be, Orestus.

ORESTUS (*pleading.*) Precious one, because I desire thee, is thy pride offended? (HELEN *shakes head — slowly.*)

ORESTUS (*after a moment; derisively; pointing toward vault.*) Thou art not perchance thinking still of him? (HELEN'S *silence is affirmative. Tearing his hair,* ORESTUS *struts about, muttering incoherently.*)

ORESTUS (*after a moment; calmer.*) Why art thou so positive he was the better man? (HELEN *shakes head — doubtfully.*)

ORESTUS. Still thou preferest his coldness. Is he a king in a palace? Or a corpse in a vault? (*Ripping open his shirt.*) Feel my heart. It pounds. I'm alive. On fire! For you! For you alone! (*A moment longer* HELEN *hesitates, then . . .*)

HELEN (*advancing slowly; eyes shining.*) Orestus!

ORESTUS (*taking her in his arms.*) My darling! (*Stroking her hair.*) My gorgeous Helen! (*Pulls her close to him.*)

HELEN. My strong Orestus! (ORESTUS *presses his lips to* HELEN'S. *CURTAIN BEGINS TO FALL.* ORESTUS *bends* HELEN *back . . . back . . .*)

CURTAIN IS DOWN
(*Should rise at once.*)

THREE HOURS HAVE ELAPSED.
(*Vigil light burns dimly.*)
(HELEN *and* ORESTUS, *in close embrace, are sleeping. After a moment, running, and out of breath,* ARTEMIS *enters from the left.*)

ARTEMIS (*standing over them; calling.*) Mistress! (*Louder.*) Mistress!

ORESTUS (*waking; surly.*) Needst make such a clatter, slave?

ARTEMUS. Hear me, soldier! Hear me!

ORESTUS (*sitting up.*) Silence!

HELEN (*sitting up.*) What meaneth this?

ARTEMIS (*pleading.*) O Mistress, hear me!

HELEN (*annoyed.*) Speak! And be quick!

ARTEMIS (*fearfully.*) In a moment of weakness, Mistress, I closed my eyes. Just for a moment, Mistress. I swear. When I opened them . . .

ORESTUS (*jumping to his feet.*) What then?

ARTEMIS (*with a helpless gesture.*) The cross was bare.

ORESTUS (*seizing her.*) What cross?

ARTEMIS (*whimpering.*) The nigh one.

ORESTUS (*throwing her roughly from him.*) Curse thee for a worthless bitch! (ORESTUS *struts about.*)

HELEN (*standing over* ARTEMIS; *furious.*) Fifty lashes shalt thou have on thy back. Thou evil pig!

ARTEMIS (*whining.*) Woe! Woe! Woe!

HELEN. Thou black slut! A thousand goats to Diana, if thou wert dead before my eyes. This very instant!

ARTEMIS (*rolling over; to* ORESTUS.) Take thy great sword. Run me through and through.

HELEN. And be quick.

ORESTUS (*stopping; controlled again; thoughtfully.*) Better to slit my own belly. 'Twill but save some one else the trouble. (HELEN, *gravely concerned, takes* ORESTUS *by wrists.*)

HELEN. Speak not so, darling. Thou frightenest me. (*The lovers look deeply into each other's eyes.* ARTEMIS, *unnoticed, observes them. Then, after a moment, deliberately,* ORESTUS *crosses one finger over the other.*)

ORESTUS (*quietly.*) Helen, many times have Death and I been so. When the sun is up I shall be ready.

HELEN (*throwing her arms around him.*) Never! Never, darling! I could not bear to lose thee now.

ORESTUS (*calmly.*) 'Tis written in the "Book," Helen The penalty for the soldier who deserts his post . . .

HELEN (*clinging to him.*) No! No — o! (ORESTUS *strokes* HELEN'S *hair as she sobs quietly in his arms.*)

ORESTUS (*presently.*) My pretty, Helen! There! There! (*For a moment longer* HELEN *continues to cry. Then all at once she stops, her body stiffens, and she pushes away from him. Puzzled,* ORESTUS *looks at her. There is something beyond him in her face, and in her eyes, as she glances swiftly from him to the tomb and back again. His bewilderment increases as* HELEN *smiles, and turns to* ARTEMIS.)

HELEN (*excited*). Get thee back to the crosses. Hurry! Lest the other be gone, too. (*Clapping hands.*) Be off! (*Exit* ARTEMIS — *left. When she is beyond the mound and almost off,* ARTEMIS *glances back over her shoulder, and discovering*

that she is not being followed, hides behind a tree. Furtively she watches the lovers.)

ORESTUS (*holding* HELEN *close and looking down at her; patiently.*) Why dost thou trouble thyself?

HELEN (*softly.*) Didst thou not chide ME, Orestus, for sacrificing life for one who was dead? (*Puzzled,* ORESTUS *nods.*)

HELEN (*after a moment; tenderly.*) My poor Orestus! (*She takes his hand.*) Come. (*Pointing toward vault.*) Let him take the knave's place. (*She walks ahead slowly. Amazed,* ORESTUS *holds back.* HELEN *continues on alone — her hand behind her. A moment longer the soldier hesitates, then . . .*)

ORESTUS (*exulting; half to himself.*) Zeus, how the woman loves me! (*With a light step he overtakes* HELEN, *and puts his hand in hers. Together they enter the tomb. As they pass through the bronze doors,* ARTEMIS *appears from behind the tree.*)

ARTEMIS. Loves thee! (*Sardonically.*) Yea! (*Pointing to vault.*) She loved him the same way. (*With a brittle laugh,* ARTEMIS *hurries off — left.*)

CURTAIN

THE MATRON OF EPHESUS

(*A translation of the original story*)

There was a married woman in Ephesus of such famous virtue that she drew women even from the neighboring states to gaze upon her. So when she had buried her husband, the common fashion of following the procession with loose hair, and beating the naked breast in front of the crowd, did not satisfy her. She followed the dead man even to his resting place, and began to watch and weep night and day over the body, which was laid in an underground vault in the Greek fashion. Neither her parents nor her relations could divert her from thus torturing herself, and courting death by starvation; the officials were at last rebuffed and left her; every

one mourned for her as a woman of unique character, and she was now passing her fifth day without food. A devoted maid sat by the failing woman, shed tears in sympathy with her woes, and at the same time filled up the lamp, which was placed in the tomb, whenever it sank. Every class of person admitted this was the one true and brilliant example of chastity and love.

At this moment the governor of the province gave orders that some robbers should be crucified near the small building where the lady was bewailing her recent loss. So on the next night when the soldier, who was watching the crosses, to prevent anyone taking down a body for burial, observed a light shining plainly among the tombs, and heard a mourner's groans, a very human weakness made him anxious to know who it was and what he was doing.

So he went down into the vault, and on seeing a very beautiful woman, at first halted in confusion, as if he had seen a portent or some ghost from the world beneath. But afterward noticing the dead man lying there, and watching the woman's tears and the marks of her nails on her face, he came to the correct conclusion, that she found her regret for the lost one unendurable. He therefore brought his supper into the tomb, and began to urge the mourner not to persist in useless grief and break her heart with unprofitable sobs; for all men made the same end and found the same resting-place, and so on with the other platitudes which restore wounded spirits to health. But she took no notice of his sympathy, struck and tore her breast more violently than ever, pulled out her hair, and laid it on the dead body. Still the soldier did not retire, but tried to give the poor woman food with similar encouragements, until the maid, who was no doubt seduced by the smell of his wine, first gave in herself and put out her hand at his kindly invitation, and then refreshed with food and drink, began to assail her mistress's obstinacy, and say, "What will you gain by all this, if you faint away with hunger, if you bury yourself alive, if you breathe out your undoomed soul before Fate calls for it? Believest thou that the ashes or the spirit of the buried dead can feel thy woe? Will you not begin life afresh? Will you not shake off this womanish failing and enjoy the blessings of the light so long as you are allowed? . . . Your poor dead

husband's body here to persuade you to keep alive?'' People are always ready to listen when they are urged to take a meal or to keep alive. So the lady, being thirsty after several days' abstinence, allowed her resolution to be broken down, and filled herself with food as greedily as the maid.

Well, you know which temptation generally assails a man on a full stomach. The soldier used the same insinuating phrases which had persuaded the lady to consent to live, to conduct an assault upon her virtue. Her modest eye saw in him a young man, handsome and eloquent. The maid begged her to be gracious, and then said, ''Wilt thou fight love even when love pleases thee? Or dost thou never remember in whose lands thou art resting?'' I need hide the fact no longer. The lady ceased to hold out, and the conquering hero won her over entire. So they passed not only their wedding night together, but the next day and a third, of course shutting the door of the vault, so that any friend or stranger who came to the tomb would imagine that this most virtuous lady had breathed her last over her husband's body. Well, the soldier was delighted with the woman's beauty, and his stolen pleasure; he brought up all the fine things his means permitted, and carried them to the tomb the moment darkness fell. So the parents of one of the crucified, seeing that the watch was ill-kept, took their man down in the dark and administered the last rite to him. The soldier was eluded while he was off duty, and the next day, seeing one of the crosses without its corpse, he was in terror of punishment, and explained to the lady what had happened. He declared that he would not wait for court-martial, but would punish his own neglect with a thrust of the sword. So she had better get ready a place for a dying man and let the gloomy vault enclose both her husband and her lover. The lady's heart was tender as well as pure. ''Heaven forbid,'' she replied, ''that I should look at the same moment on the dead bodies of two men whom I love.

''No, I would rather make a dead man useful, than send a live man to death.'' After this speech she ordered her husband's body to be taken out of the coffin and fixed upon the empty cross. The soldier availed himself of this far-seeing woman's device, and the people wondered the next day by what means the dead man had ascended the cross.

POEMS

By Margaret Wehrfritz

REVELATION

A small west wind
Blew from the clouds of spring
Across my lawn,
And carried on its waves
Petals from the apple blossoms.
It tossed them gently
Above the green grass,
And they gleamed white
Like snowflakes
Against the blue sky.

O small west wind,
Blow gently, blow softly,
Lest you steal all my flowers
And leave in my heart's shrine
The bare image of my loved one.

SPRING SONG

White as the pear blossom
Is my love for you,
And clear as the song of the robin
Is the melody of your name
Singing in my heart.

PORTRAIT OF A HAND

Carved jade ring
Ornamenting a sun-bronzed hand,
With painted fingertips
Enamelled in porcelain white,
Grasping a thin amber glass
In which clinks crystalline ice
In deep purple liquid.

— *Irma Wassall*

EVENFALL

By Adolf Wenig

Translated from the Czech by Libbie Breuer Scholten

From the lea a plaintive corncrake calls,
His sobbing notes among the sedges dying;
And evening creeps from out the darkened woods
As clouds of blackbirds from the fields are flying.

Day sinks in death, while from its open wound
There in the west its crimson blood is flowing —
The village curfew sounds a mournful knell,
A cenotaph, the black pine lonely growing . . .

Now all is quiet save the gentle cooing
Of wood-doves somewhere in the forest's blackness.
O weary heart, do you not hear? —
The end is near —

Slow wistful shadows settle o'er the vale —
Deep in the woods a path leads, dimly pale:
Shall I — follow it ?
And never more return ?

There's peace there, peace for the soul —
Night creeps from out the darkened woods
And in the field the crake is still.

EX LIBRIS

By Everett Gillis

Out of the book and out of the stars,
Wisdom and light for earth.
Out of the heart the lilt of song
Bright with joy and mirth.

Within my book, within my stars,
Wisdom and light are dead;
And in my heart grope weary songs
Unsung, unheard, unread.

ON PAST THE BARS

By Josephine Hawks

Let me commune and have meeting with these:
Rainbow and sunset and tall swaying trees,

Small living things when the morning is new,
Drinking from grass blades all heavy with dew,

Coral that tips a white butterfly's dress,
Thistle-down soft as a fairy's caress,

Buds I hear sigh as they yield to the bloom,
Quick-footed oriole stirring her plume.

Slow, gentle rain I would feel on my face;
And in my hair, let the wind leave a trace.

Let me know noon-time and then evening lights,
Skies that are steadfast on long winter nights,

Promiseful things in a measureless scope,
Breathing of beauty and grandeur and hope.

These I would know, touch and feel as they seem,
Yet on beyond to the infinite scheme,

I would reach farther, yes, on past the bars,
Hedged with the symbols, yet guided by stars.

SKY'S VEIL

The air is flecked with snowflakes,
Lovely spotted veil of the sky —
Lent to the frozen earth
To wrap herself in.

— *Catherine B. Gibson*

TWO POEMS

By Elva A. Smith

EACH IN HIS WAY

Each in his own way must know
Disillusionment and pain.
This is my way; that I must go,
And you, remain.

Each in his own way must learn,
With the end of love in sight,
To lose the dream with care, and turn,
If need, to flight.

Each in his own way must find
Solace when love has ended;
My heart is either slow or blind,
Too long mended.

REMEMBERING

Here am I — remembering,
With so little to remember;
A few words spoken
On a rainy September;
A few times laughing,
A few times sighing,
But what are these that love may still
Remain undying ?
I've forgotten what we said,
And what we sighed after;
Words and sighs will come again,
But not the laughter.

WARNING

By Shirley A. Marcus

Spring comes gaily, spring comes dancing;
Comes with singing, and with smiles.
Dressed in dreams, and drenched with fragrance —
Oh, she has such charming wiles!

She brings a sweet, fantastic madness,
Born of longing and despair,
Mixed with effervescent gladness . . .
Oh, my silly heart, beware!

THE OLD ROAD

By David Mahoney

Whenever I tire of the highway,
With its endless beads of light
That sag with a weighty brilliance
Against the velvet dress of night ;
I like to take to the old road
Or detour to reach my goal
And follow the ways of a winding path
That knows the ways of the soul.

The highway is marked with signposts
Straight in the firmer sod ;
They tell, "It's so many miles to town,"
But never how near to God.
And when I'm unhurried and needing peace
I choose the road that's a stray,
Where withering leaves can make their graves
And never be swept away.

GOD TO A TIRED MOTHER

By Cecil Clayton Sargent

It is now night;
You need not pray.

I've watched you toil
Throughout the day.

You must not weep
In that tired way.

You've worked so hard
You don't need to pray.

For, in all your little deeds and cares,
I've found a world of eager prayers !

THE DARKNESS WILL GO

A Prophecy and A Threat

Black were our people, ignorant and many;
Black are we now, and living in darkness
Strewn with spots of light — light of learning,
Light of our preachers and poets, doctors, and those who teach.
America's eyes will live to see that dark
Dim to gray and lighter gray till it turns a silver glow,
And heads of black will no more bow dumbly before white.
It is not so this year, nor will it be the next,
For freedom has been ours such a tiny handful of years,
But the darkness will go, and America be lighter for its going.

— *Carol Foster*

THERE IS SOMETHING OF BEAUTY

By Herrick Lynn

There is something of beauty
In things that are not called beautiful;

In the penciled tracery of bare branches
Against stark, grey sky;
In the bitter, barren cold
Of a frozen day;
In the anguished faces of mothers
Brooding over starving children;
In dark brown clods, tilled
In mute evidence of coming fruitage;

Beauty of bleakness —
Beauty of promise —

HANDS

By Elizabeth Dutch

The house is old and alone:
The wind shivering through
Nudges a sagging door
And hurries on.

In this house
The hands of Time
Are busy destroying.

The garden is glowing light:
Amid the gay tangle
Two butterflies hover
Delicately.

In this garden
The hands of God
Are busy creating.

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